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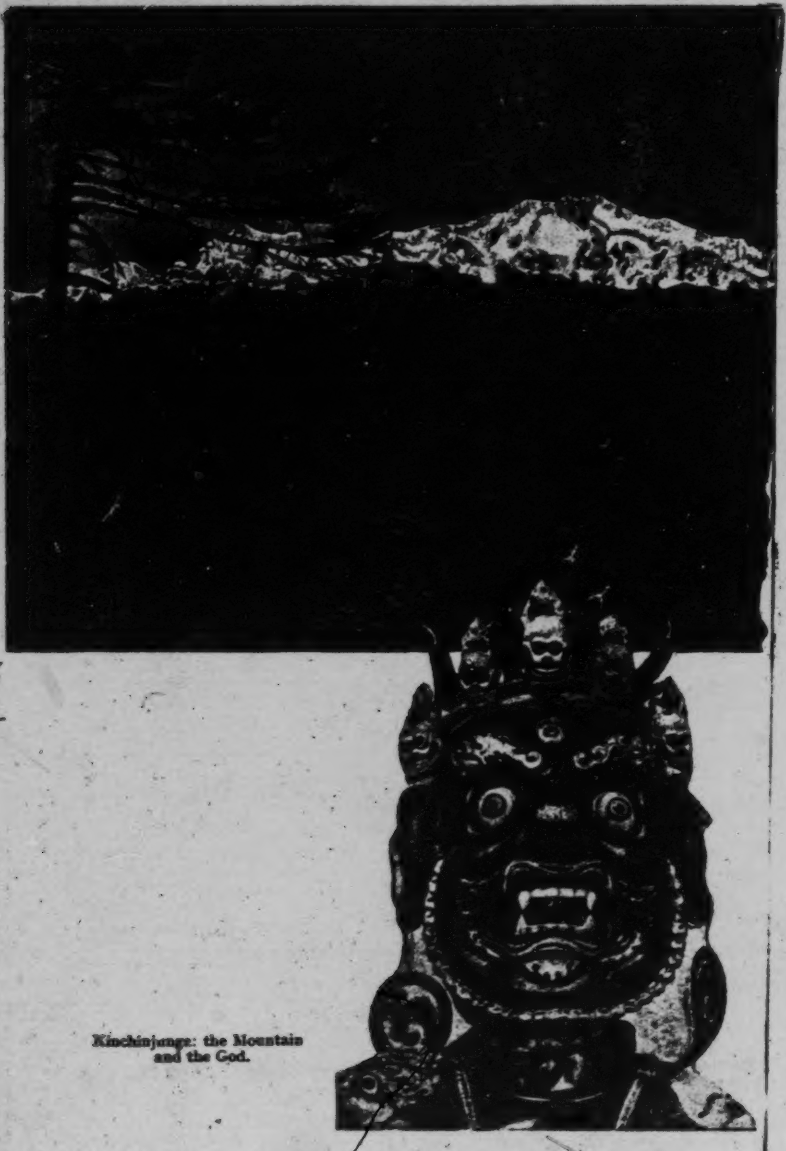

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Kinchinjunga: the Mountain and the God.

[frontispiece]

LIVING WITH LEPCHAS

A BOOK ABOUT THE SIKKIM HIMALAYAS

By JOHN MORRIS

Who also took the Photographs
which illustrate it

★

WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD
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000

To

REBECCA WEST

because she knows all about people
and can describe their characters in a line,
which I can never hope to do;
and for innumerable other reasons.

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[p. vi is blank]

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A NOTE TO THE READER

I USED TO THINK that T. E. Lawrence was being merely 104 facetious when he refused to write Arabic words in conformity with any known system of transliteration. But I have come to think, with him, that "there are some 'scientific systems' of transliteration, helpful to people who know enough Arabic [but this applies just as much to other oriental languages] not to need helping, but a wash-out for the world. I spell my names anyhow," he continues, "to show what rot the systems are." (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*)

I would not go quite so far as this, however, and would willingly use any system that gave a reader, one with no previous knowledge of the subject, some idea of the actual sounds of Lepcha words. But the Lepcha language is full of Tibetan, in the transliteration of which even the experts have so far failed to agree. What, for instance, can one make of a word like *Bye-brag-tu rtogs byad* (this really is a Tibetan word), which one of the leading exponents of Lamaism tells me is pronounced *Je-tak-tu tog-je?* (Waddell: page 165).

But enough of this nonsense! It only remains to add that I have spelt Lepcha and Tibetan words as they sounded to me when spoken by a Lepcha, giving the vowels approximately their Italian value, and using the consonants as in English. This is near enough for all practical purposes: but, in any case, no one who reads this book is likely to want to know how to pronounce Tibetan or Lepcha; and if he does, I feel sure that the London School of Oriental Studies would be delighted to teach him.

I have generally written Tibetan and Lepcha words in italics only the first time that I have used them, but have occasionally departed from this custom for the sake of emphasising some particular word.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL

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CHAPTER I

SOME CONTRASTS AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LEPCHAS

ON the first of April 1937 His Majesty the King sent the following message to the peoples of India:

"To-day, the first of April, part of those constitutional reforms upon which Indians and British alike have bestowed so much thought and work comes into operation.

"I cannot let the day pass without assuring my Indian subjects that my thoughts and good wishes are with them on this occasion.

"A new chapter is thus opening and it is my fervent hope and prayer that the opportunities now available to them will be used wisely and generously for the lasting benefit of all my Indian people.

"GEORGE R.I."

* * * * *

"The throne room at Government House, Calcutta," notes *The Statesman* of Friday, 2nd April 1937, "was yesterday the scene of a brief but historic ceremony when His Excellency the Governor administered the oath of allegiance, office, and secrecy to the Premier, Mr. Fazlul Huq, and members of the Bengal Ministry.

"The Premier and eleven Ministers occupied a circular table immediately in front of the *dais*, each being presented to His Excellency by the Chief Secretary. The Premier and Ministers repeated the three oaths, sentence by sentence, after His Excellency.

"Similar ceremonies were held in all other provincial headquarters, except in the United Provinces where no Ministry has as yet been formed.

[p 1&2 are blank]

000 "The Congress, which has refused office in six provinces where the party is in a position to form Ministries, observed a *hartal* to mark the inauguration of autonomy in the provinces.

"The *hartal* was observed in Calcutta by the closing of Hindu shops. A small minority of Moslem-owned shops were also closed.

"Public services continued as usual, but schools and offices under the control of the Calcutta Corporation were closed. No disturbances have been reported."

* * * * *

782 At almost the very moment when the Governor of Bengal
787 was administering the oath to his newly-appointed Ministers,
789 an old Lepcha woman was squatting on the ground in a
remote valley in Sikkim, with an egg pressed against her
forehead. This was the day of the *Cherim* ceremony, which is
observed all over Sikkim twice in every year: once now, and
again at the beginning of the winter. Its purpose is to find
out what sickness is likely to trouble the village during the
next few months and, since the Lepchas like to get as much
benefit as possible out of any one celebration, also to keep
[887] away hail. Kahlyeu, a gentle old man of nearly eighty, had
previously made a rough altar of the branches of trees. It
[133] faced up the valley in full sight of Kinchinjunga, the summit
[437] of which is only twenty miles away as the crow flies, but for
poor toiling man a journey of many painful days along the
[137] roughest of paths, and through thick rhododendron forest, to
787 the lower slopes alone. On his roughly constructed altar
789 Kahlyeu now put a large brass tray in which were seven
778 cones of butter, four eggs (some said it should have been
782 three), one rupee, three small butter-lamps and a Tibetan
[285 ceremonial scarf. The tray was placed on top of a plaited
415] bamboo winnowing-tray, on which was spread a piece of red
cotton cloth. All this was an offering to the spirits who dwell
[776] in the mountain, which the local people know only as
Konchen. Before the eggs were placed in position Pom-ri,
the old woman who was making the offering, placed each in

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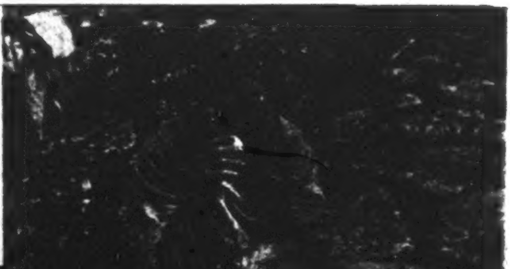

The *Cherim* ceremony. The *Mun* Pom-Ri divining by means of an egg.

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The rough altar, with the offering to Kinchinjunga in position.

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Kahlyeu and the *Mun* imploring the spirits to accept the offering.

[facing p. 4]

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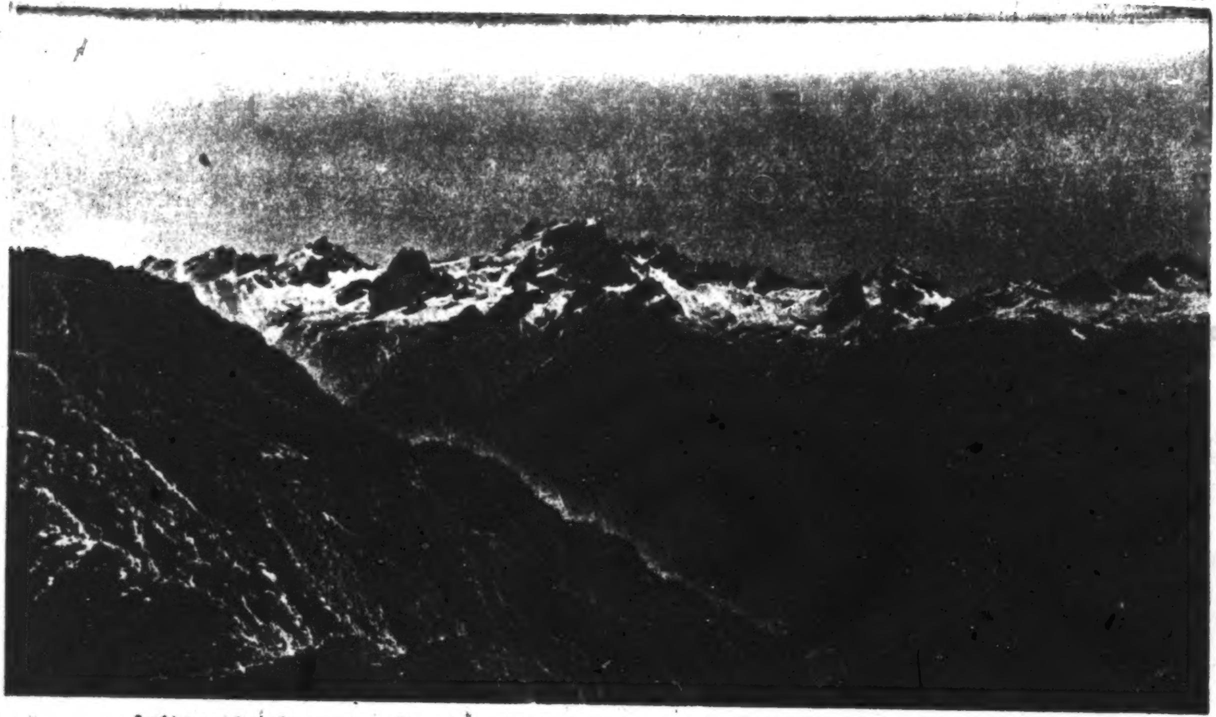
2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[facing p. 5]



Looking east from the monastery. The central peak is Pauhunri, and the ridge of which it forms a part is the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim.

782 turn to her forehead and said a short prayer. She told us
787 afterwards that by this means she could ascertain what devils
789 of sickness were likely to trouble the village (on this occasion
778 it was coughs and cold); and by offering them the grain and other things ensure that their visitations should at least cause no permanent harm.

787 As soon as the eggs were placed in position on the tray a
789 bowl of burning juniper twigs was placed on the ground,
782 just to the right of the altar. This was to drive the clouds away from the top of the mountain in order that the spirits might see what was being offered them. Pom-ri now started to chant in a cracked and mumbling voice. In her right hand
[415] she held a small drinking bowl, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A woman helper ladled strained spirit into the bowl from time to time from a large vessel which stood on the ground beside her; and on the other side of Pom-ri stood Kahlyeu, his cap, filled with grain, in one hand. From time to time Pom-ri threw the contents of her bowl towards the mountain, when it was at once refilled by her assistant; and as she did this the old man threw out a handful of grain from his cap. He, too, chanted, and at times the pair seemed to be moaning in unison. But they were both so old, and their voices so cracked and low that it was impossible to catch their words. I did, however, frequently hear the word Konchen at the moment when the libations were being offered. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the pair turned about and faced down the valley, chanting and making offering as before.

Having propitiated the spirits of Konchen they had now turned their attention to such evils as come from the direction of the plains; on this particular occasion it was hail. In the meantime a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes behind.
[231] This was done by thrusting a short pointed bamboo stake into its heart, the usual method of killing small domestic animals. At the place where it was killed a fire was lighted and the carcass lightly singed. After this the meat, including the animal's head, the liver (on a stake), and the

782 washed entrails, together with a small bamboo container
787 filled with the goat's blood, was placed on the ground in
789 front of the altar. The old man and woman now chanted as
before, after which the meat was taken away and distributed
[622] to all present under the supervision of the village Mandal, or
head-man. The goat was offered first to Konchen and then
to all the other spirits. During the whole of this celebration
none of the spectators, of which there must have been fifty or
sixty, paid the slightest attention to what was going on. As
we later noticed, this was the case on all such occasions: the
people merely sat round drinking and talking; but I did hear
a child reproved for making too much noise while the
actual chanting was in progress.

* * * * *

491 If one takes the night mail from Calcutta it is easily
possible, by motoring from Siliguri, to reach Gangtok, the
capital of independent Sikkim, well before lunch on the
following morning. The motor road at present ends at
Gangtok, but the Talung Valley can be reached the following
evening by any moderately active walker. The actual
distance is about twenty-five miles; but included in this is a
descent of nearly three thousand feet, immediately followed
by an ascent of like amount. This drop and subsequent rise
is repeated again at the end of the journey, but fortunately
on a smaller scale. If really in a hurry it would be possible to
reach the Talung in something under thirty-six hours from
Calcutta; but having crossed the rickety suspension bridge
across the Teesta, the sole means of access to the valley, one
steps backward in time, so to speak, into another world. In
131 Calcutta (said to be the second city in the British Empire;
but in my opinion an easy first in dirt and squalor) Englishmen,
and others, toil all day in a vile climate for the sole
purpose of acquiring more wealth than their fellows: but in
the Talung Valley, which has meadows as green as any in
Europe, and some of the finest mountain scenery in the
world, money is considered of little importance, and one man

as good as another. Although the two places are so near in 181
terms of modern travel, in everything else Talung is thousands of years behind, looked at, that is, from what our unhappy machine-age (but actually slave-driven) civilisation is pleased to regard as progress. Talung has neither drains nor electric light; nor, more fortunately, any newspapers; but its inhabitants are happy and, all things considered, contented. A few, a very few, of the people had heard vague and distorted rumours of the Great War (that which did not end war): none, however, so far as I know, had heard of India's new constitution, nor even of King George the Sixth, and the day of the Coronation passed unnoticed, except in so far as it was a fine day and so permitted a full day's work in the fields.

My first view of the Talung was in the spring of 1936, on 114
the way to Everest. We did not enter the valley since our 133
road lay straight through Sikkim to the plains of Tibet, and there was no time for excursions off the route. But from Singhik bungalow one looks right up the valley to Kinchinjunga at its head, one of the most spectacular sights in the whole Himalaya. But on this occasion we did not see the mountain, which was hidden in cloud, and the valley itself looked grim and uninviting, with patches of winter snow still lying in the shadier parts of the higher slopes. When we returned in July the valley was deep in mist and filled with small clouds which looked like floating wads of cotton-wool; but even at this distance many shining patches of emerald cultivation were clearly visible on the steep hillsides, although we could see no villages.

During the previous autumn I had been staying in Nepal, 114
hoping, amongst other things, to get permission to round off my ethnological studies of the people (which I had been pursuing intermittently for years) by a stay of some months in an actual Gurkha village. My proposals proved unacceptable to the Maharaja, who found it impossible to make any exception to the rule, laid down by his predecessors and never once relaxed, by which no European is permitted to

114 travel in the interior of the country. As an ethnologist I bitterly regretted this decision: but as a friend of the country I fully sympathised with His Highness's orders. If the policy of excluding strangers from Nepal is ever changed (which seems unlikely), I hope that I may be one of the first to benefit from it: but for the present no one who has seen the disastrous results of the contact of Western civilisation with some of the more primitive peoples of India can doubt the wisdom of Nepal's rulers.

In the meantime I was forced to consider other alternatives. It had always been my intention eventually to spend
some time among the people of the Tibetan border. There
are many Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, and I hoped, after
seeing the people in their own country, to find out how they
adjusted their lives when they came in contact with another
culture. Also, there were the Lepchas, a shy and retiring
people, said to be rapidly dying out, who claim to be the
original inhabitants of the country. While I was still in
Nepal I discussed plans with the British Minister, Colonel
Bailey (some of whose earlier wanderings resulted in the first
discovery of the blue poppy, *Meconopsis Baileyii*, which now
thrives even in Hyde Park). He had been for many years
Political Officer in Sikkim and knew the country intimately.
It was from him that I first heard of the Talung Valley.
Although he had not himself visited it he told me that it was
the one purely Lepcha place still in existence. In all other
[144 parts of Sikkim the people had intermarried with Tibetans
[177 and Nepalis to such an extent that they had lost all traces of
619] tribal consciousness. Not so, however, in the Talung; for
this valley formed part of the Maharaja's personal estate and
none but Lepchas were permitted to own land or to settle
in it.

114 On our return from Everest I talked the matter over with
609 the Maharaja. His Highness said he had no objection to my
spending some months in the valley; but warned me that it
might be difficult to get on speaking terms with the people,
who had the reputation of being extremely shy and of

resenting the intrusion of strangers. He told me that a few 114
years ago, during an epidemic of small-pox, he had sent a 609
vaccinator across to the valley in order to afford the people protection from the disease. But as soon as the man crossed the bridge the people fled from their houses and took to the forest, only returning when he became tired of waiting and went back to Gangtok. So far as I was concerned this story only added zest to the chase; and before leaving for England I arranged to return to Sikkim in the following spring.

On a previous occasion when I was in England, in 1934 I 114
think it was, I had met Geoffrey Gorer at the house of a mutual friend, and we had carried on an intermittent correspondence ever since. In the meantime he had spent some months in America, and while there had met Dr. Ruth Benedict, whose remarkable *Patterns of Culture* has influenced many of the younger and more open-minded ethnologists. As a result of working both with her and with Dr. Margaret Mead, the best-known exponent of her ideas, Geoffrey decided that he wanted to see for himself just exactly what field ethnology was all about, so I said he could come and help me, little thinking that he would accept. We were, now that I come to think of it, a most oddly assorted couple: Geoffrey, a self-acknowledged gourmet, and never really happy when too long away from the centre of things; and I, who can hardly tell the difference between caviare and tinned salmon, and to whom civilisation (so called) is a thing to be escaped from at all costs for as long and as often as possible. Also, according to Geoffrey, I have strong masochistic tendencies; and since I am passionately devoted to mountains and mountaineering a well-developed "death wish"; but in his view nearly all violent exercise is merely a method of punishing oneself. Before taking to ethnology I had been for nearly twenty years in the regular army; but as for this it was, in Geoffrey's words, "only occasionally apparent." Actually, all this boils down to the fact that he belongs to that post-war generation to whom (quite rightly) freedom of every sort is all, whereas I grew up in an earlier

114 age and was taught to believe that a measure of self-discipline was good for the soul. We never had a quarrel, but doubtless got on one another's nerves from time to time. In view of the fact that our life in Sikkim alternated between intense hard work and complete but unavoidable boredom this was almost inevitable.

114 These personal details would normally be of no interest to
121 anyone but our own selves. I have inserted them here, however, because, to me at least, it seems important in reading a description of a foreign culture to know how the writer fits into his own. It is almost impossible (and would be extremely dull) to describe the customs of a people entirely objectively; and so it follows that my description of Lepcha home life is inevitably coloured, and possibly limited, by my own outlook. I have concentrated on the things that interested me. Fortunately for us both, Geoffrey was interested mostly in other aspects and is writing a psychological study of the people from the Freudian and Marxist points of view. Our two books, therefore, while dealing (more or less) with the same subject, will have little in common; and in addition I have drawn on my notes and memories of previous journeys in Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet.

121 According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* ethnography is the "scientific description of races of men." I can make no such claim for the following account, which, although the
122 work was carried out under the auspices of the William Wyse Foundation (University of Cambridge), which awarded me its studentship in Social Anthropology, pretends to be no more than a plain unvarnished description of some four months' residence in a Lepcha village. It is not intended for experts and assumes no previous knowledge. The "scientific description" of the culture as a whole, in which we hope to collaborate, may possibly follow later, but will not be ready for some considerable time.

* * * * *

We left Marseilles towards the end of November 1936 on the N.Y.K. *Terukuni Maru.* I had stipulated for this partly because I wanted to see Ceylon, and partly because long experience had already decided me that as soon as I ceased to have the privilege of travelling at the expense of His Majesty's Government I would give foreign shipping a trial: also there would be no organised games. But in this I was wrong; for the Japanese appear to be even more addicted to this particular form of torture than are the British; and on the *Terukuni Maru* the only difference was that the irritating thud of the shuffle-board quoit started earlier and went on later than on any boat on which I have previously travelled. The captain, who spoke perfect English, took us all over the ship and it was gratifying to notice that most of the engine-room equipment was made in Britain. The watches here were exactly the same as on British boats, but the cabin and dining-room stewards seemed never off duty. We were not permitted to see their quarters. I once asked our cabin steward how much he was paid, but he would not tell me. He merely smiled and bowed politely: "Sir, very, very little," he said. All that one had previously heard of Japanese politeness is true: one was bowed in and out of meals, on to and off the decks, and on every other possible occasion; and nothing was too much trouble. We found most of the Japanese passengers charming, the one exception being a minor diplomat who was returning on leave. The purser agreed that he was not calculated to impress foreigners with the charm of his countrymen; but it appears that this attitude is not now uncommon with "progressive" Japanese, who are inclined to drop their innate national politeness (in place of which they have so far nothing else to put), thinking this to be the outward and visible sign of Western efficiency. The English passengers, mostly planters and business officials, were of no interest and of the type which form the background to any of Mr. Maugham's incomparable novels. We reached Colombo on the sixth of December.

This is no place to chronicle our progress through Ceylon, which remains for me the ideal country in which to do nothing. After long years in India, however, it was a complete surprise to note the efficiency with which the country is run: wayside dak bungalows complete with bedding and refrigerators, to say nothing of excellently served meals, of which wild boar, venison and the best honey I have ever tasted, often formed part. Also it was a relief to be able to travel by train without humping one's bedding about, a luxury which the Indian Railways steadfastly refuse to permit their passengers to enjoy.

After a week of intensive sightseeing, having done our duty by the guide-book, we crossed to India. Here are a few extracts from a diary I wrote at the time:

"15th *December:* Got off the train at Madura and went straight off to see the temple. This is the best 'spectacle' I have ever seen in India and is pure *Arabian Nights* (unexpurgated version). Reminds me of a 'super' film, produced regardless of cost. Most unspiritual and everything done for show. A great deal of money being squandered by the poor [778] on offerings to priests and garlands of jasmine flowers to hang round the idols' necks; and outside the temple every sign of the most degrading poverty. Horrible mean-looking people for the most part, who give one the impression of indulging in every kind of secret vice (according to the Abbé Dubois this part of India is the home of the most erotic secret sects, and it certainly looks as though he is right).

"16th *December:* On to Tanjore. Easily the best temple in [341] South India. Good use made of open spaces, and one does not get the impression of everything being 'cluttered up,' as in most of these places. The official guide here was an odd [771 529] Brahman who does not believe in Hinduism and says he only wears his thread so that he may enter Brahman 'coffe houses,' an institution I have not previously come across in Northern India. Insists on buying us a drink after dinner and says he would like to collaborate (I wonder what in?), but is obviously a bit tight.

French India AY2

"17th *December:* To Cuddalore, where Reginald Schomberg's 361
car was waiting to take us on to Pondicherry, the
capital town of French India. Pondicherry looks rather like
an old town in the Nîmes or Arles district; everything decaying,
and plaster falling off all the walls; pot-holes and puddles [491]
all over the main street. In the middle of the road a large
notice saying '*Ralentir—Travaux*'; but no 'travaux' visible;
only a couple of Tamil coolies fast asleep behind the notice
board. There might be good sea bathing but Schomberg
says this is out of the question, since the whole foreshore is
used as a Tamil latrine. The British Consulate-General, in
the main street, is ramshackle and uncomfortable, and is said
originally to have been a brothel. This seems likely since the
accommodation consists of a large *salon* with numerous small
rooms leading off it. The French and native (Ville Noire) 563
parts of the town are separated by a dirty little canal. [487]
Formerly no native was allowed in the European quarter
after nine at night, even personal servants; but this rule no
longer holds good, but none of the European houses has any
servants' quarters. Pondicherry is nowadays chiefly used for 439
the purpose of smuggling cheap Japanese goods, mostly silk,
into British India. This is difficult to control, since the
French are uninterested and Pondicherry is not, as the maps [361]
would lead one to expect, one large area but a number of
small plots, some of them only an acre in extent, surrounded
by British territory. Moreover, smuggling is an easy way for 439
the native officials to add to their meagre incomes, and 636
inevitable while the French continue to underpay their
subordinate colonial officials. The local French go about in 493
large Bath chairs, called *Pousse-pousse*, pushed by a couple of
perspiring Tamils. I notice that even in this hot damp 291
climate the middle-aged French *bourgeoise* still sticks to her
voluminous black woollens. Also the cemetery is unmistakably 765
French: enormous monuments, some with
photographs of the deceased inset, and the usual plentiful
array of mauve bead wreaths."

* * * * *

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Gurkha AK4

000 On arrival at Madras, which an Indian writer, Mr. R. K. Narayan, describes as "hot for ten months of the year and hotter for two," we found a railway strike in progress; and since there was no boat on to Calcutta for a week after our arrival we did not reach that place until the last day of December. There was nothing to detain us in Calcutta except the fine collection of Indian paintings and sculpture in the museum, and for that a full morning was sufficient. There is nothing of architectural interest in the city, unless one includes the recently-completed Victoria Memorial. Of this it is reported that a famous continental architect burst into tears as soon as he beheld it: "What a pity," he said; "and such lovely material!"

Near Government House there are a number of bronze statues of retired viceroys. Once, when I was passing through Calcutta, I had with me a Gurkha orderly, and to pass the time before our train left in the evening I took him all over the city. The only thing that really interested him was this double row of defunct pro-Consuls, to which he asked to be
6 taken a second time. I asked him why. "Well," he said,
[565 "with us, you know, a dark skin is a sign of inferior birth;
826] but you people, you bring out great men from England to rule the country and then put up statues which show them with black faces: or is it that they go that colour when they die?"

* * * * *

L

114 After a month or so in Kalimpong, during which we struggled each morning with the intricacies of Lepcha grammar, we left for Gangtok, travelling on foot in order to give Geoffrey a chance to see something of the country, which was new to him. As a concession to his hedonistic tendencies I agreed to keep on our cook, who demanded (and obtained) the unheard-of wage of fifty-five rupees a month. I had never before travelled in such luxury, usually contenting myself with one general drudge-of-all-work and the absolute minimum of cooking apparatus. This time,

however, we took a complete outfit, including even china 114
plates and cups, a regular battery of pots and pans, and vast quantities of a special brand of American coffee (which I must admit was excellent), and special machines for its preparation. Most of the apparatus was never used.

On arrival at Gangtok our staff was increased by Palden, 114
one of His Highness's Lepcha orderlies, who was to act as 124
liaison between us and the locals. He spent most of his time in scouring the countryside in search of chickens and eggs. This job was not quite such a sinecure as perhaps it sounds; for towards the end of our stay we had consumed practically all the local poultry and had to get even eggs from as far as three and four days' journey away. By virtue of his official connection with the Palace, Palden's status (albeit humble; his normal duties consisting in the delivery of letters in Gangtok) was swollen to enormous stature in the eyes of the trusting Lepchas. From our point of view, however, this was all to the good, for it enabled him to demand permission for us to see all sorts of domestic ceremonies which would otherwise have been entirely hidden from our eyes.

There was also Geoffrey's English-speaking interpreter,
Sukra Sing; and to work with me, one Dhawa, who spoke [191
Lepcha and Nepali, but who knew no English. Both of these 797]
were Christians, the latter being a recent convert. They were both very disapproving, as indeed was Palden, of the local Lepchas, to whom they considered themselves vastly superior. On wet days, or on the frequent occasions when we
had no informants, Dhawa would spend the whole day, from [534]
earliest dawn until well after dark, playing a bamboo flute which he had himself constructed. Unless interrupted he would play right through the Church of Scotland Hymnal, sometimes repeating his favourite tunes five and six times in succession. I believe he did this as an atonement for the extremely Rabelaisian conversations he was at times asked to translate. Whenever the conversation had in his opinion gone far enough in this direction he would get up without a word and slink quietly away; and shortly after we would hear the

114 horribly familiar strains of "Abide with me," slightly out of
124 tune, issuing from the house next door in which he and the
servants lived. I never made any effort to restrain him, for
which I hope to receive due credit in any future existence
which may be my lot.

Sukra Sing was what in India is technically known as a
"compounder," which means that he had worked in a
hospital for some months, knew a certain amount (in his
case a dangerous amount) of simple doctoring and first-aid
methods, and was authorised to "compound," or make up
medicines to prescription, without, however, being responsible
if he inadvertently confused aconite with aqua. He
797 was also under training as a missionary and was working
under the auspices of the Church of Scotland, whose
missionaries are rightly interested less in obtaining "scalps"
than in improving the people's condition, the only possible
excuse, in my opinion, for missionary work amongst primitive
peoples. I shall have more to say about missionary activities
later on in this book; but in the meantime I cannot help
thinking that Sukra Sing will now go out into the field with
considerably more tolerance for his "uncivilised" Lepcha
brethren than would otherwise have been the case. He was
fortunately not musical, but showed signs towards the end of
our stay of a wakening interest in the flute. Dhawa, however,
preferred to play solo.

* * * * *

114 We left Gangtok without any very clear idea of our exact
636 destination. His Highness had suggested Jongu as being the
most suitable place in which to commence our studies; and
so to Jongu we set off. No one was quite sure of the exact
position of this place; nor was the Ordnance Survey map
helpful, for it omitted all trace of this, to us at least, important
place. On arrival at Mangen, however, where we were to
leave the main trade route through Sikkim, the mystery was
solved, for it there transpired that Jongu was not a village but
a district; a district, moreover, which stretched from roughly

Tempa.

Grandfather.

[facing p. 16]

Lingtem Monastery.

133

Storm clouds over Kinchinjunga.

[facing p. 17]

114 the top of Kinchinjunga to the far banks of the Teesta, which
636 we could see churning away a thousand feet below us. To which village did we wish to go? Our informant rattled off the names of the numerous alternatives with machine-gun rapidity, but so far as I was concerned one place was as good as another. I said that I wanted a large village and one where the houses were all close together, since this would facilitate work and enable us to camp in the middle. In answer to this it appeared that there were two possible
[246] alternatives: Lingtem and Lungden. The former was said to possess a fine new monastery, whereas Lungden had none; also it was slightly larger and a bit more inaccessible. I plumped for Lingtem, monasteries being very much in my line, and thither we decided to go the following morning.

Very early the next morning Palden came to my bedside. During the night he had been talking to the villagers (they are constantly in and out of Mangen), and they were not so certain that they wanted us now that they realised we wished to stay in Lingtem for at least some months. They were suspicious of our motives, so he said, and were afraid that we had come to enlist them for some sort of service elsewhere. He also said that he was unable to allay their suspicions, since he himself, to be quite frank, was a bit uncertain about it all.

177 The Jongu people had of course seen plenty of Europeans.
484 Most of them went from time to time to Gangtok, and many had been as far afield as Kalimpong and Darjeeling: also on several occasions the members of the various Kinchinjunga expeditions had passed through their valley; but this was a very different matter from settling down to stay for months in one village.

123 Amongst the Lingtem men was one Tempa who, I discovered, spoke Nepali fluently: also he was a man of some position in the village. I sent for him. I told him why we had come: that we Europeans had made a sorry mess of the business of living: that we had forgotten to a great extent what it meant to be happy. I told him also that at one time the people of Europe, too, had lived lives as free and

123 untrammelled as I had been led to believe the Lepchas still did; and that if this were really true, I wanted to see where we, in our ignorance and haste, had made mistakes. Also, there might be some things in which we could help the Lepchas. We were neither of us doctors; but we had plenty of simple medicines and would do what we could. All we wanted was to live quietly in the village: to talk to people, and see how they ordered their lives. We would give no trouble; nor did we shoot or fish. Somehow I convinced him and he agreed that we might go. He would collect coolies to carry our baggage and we could start as soon as they had finished their meal. "Could we be ready by ten o'clock?" We could.

133 We dropped quickly down to the Teesta, crossed the iron
491 suspension bridge, which was plentifully decorated with
768 votive Buddhist flags, and had struggled to the top of the pass, called Sungphyok Hlo, which is the real entrance to the Talung, by midday. This low pass is formed by a ridge that runs at right angles to the main Talung Valley and is duplicated on the other side of the river which here runs through a small gorge. I was told that it was formed in this way.

773 Konchen is the lord of all the devils. His elder daughter
823 is Chomo Hla Ri (Chomolari is on the edge of the Tibetan plateau and was climbed last year, for the first time, by Mr. F. Spencer Chapman), and his younger daughter is called Gongtuk Hlo, which is a ridge running down to the Teesta between Mangen and Singhik. Now the hill behind Lingtem is called Lungi Pano, or King Lungi, and he had a daughter named Sundem Pandi who was married to Sungphyok Hlo. The ridge opposite to Sungphyok Hlo is called Kahypo Hlo, and at one time these two were constantly quarrelling over the possession of King Lungi's daughter. Since they were unable to agree Konchen decided to put a stop to their quarrels, and so it was that he sent his daughter Gongtuk Hlo to part them. Gongtuk Hlo has remained there ever since; and thus the two have never been able to meet again.

I suspect that geologists would find this explanation 000 unacceptable: but in Lingtem there are no geologists; and as for me, I prefer the Lepcha story. It is a good example of their way of thinking and will serve as an introduction to what is to follow.

We reached Lingtem in an hour from the pass and found 114 the headman waiting for us with a gift of eggs and milk. He told us we might live in the monastery itself; but this had the disadvantage that one might not smoke inside the building. Eventually, however, the Mandal said it would be all right providing there was no smoking in the actual rooms where the images are kept; so we decided to move in straight away.

For want of a better word in the English language the 793 Lamaist *gompa* is generally described as a monastery, though such places can in no way be compared with the religious institutions known by that name in Europe. The inmates of *gompas* are sometimes celibates (but seldom so in Sikkim) and most monasteries own property: but apart from this there is, as Mme David-Neel, the eminent Tibetan scholar and traveller, has pointed out, hardly anything in common between the Christian and the Lamaist religious orders.

The Lingtem monastery is about sixty feet square and has 346 two storeys. In appearance it is almost identical with the ordinary Lepcha house, except for its greater size, and the broad band of red ochre round its walls, which denotes that [822] it is a sacred building. The lower floor contains the main hall, which is used regularly for services. Here there is a big [778] altar containing many gilded images, with a specially fine one of Guru Rimpoche (Padma Sambhava, who first introduced Buddhism into Tibet) in the centre. In front of the images there are always seven small bowls of water, in order that the gods may wash and drink. These are emptied at dusk and refilled again at dawn. When the water is taken [373 away it is replaced by one or more tiny wicks, floating in 782] either butter or oil, which give a faint glimmer like a night-light. On special occasions there will be dozens of these

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373 lights; grain and flowers are also offered to the gods from time to time.

779 On either side of the altar are pigeon-holes, in which the
[778] 222 volumes of the Teng-gyur (the great Commentary on the
346 Lamaist Scriptures) are stored, the actual scripture itself, the
[212] Kang-gyur as it is called (108 volumes), being stored in the
upstairs room which we used as a bedroom. There are no
352 chairs in the monastery, the Lamas* (here called Yukman)
[516] sitting cross-legged on planks on the floor, which are arranged
792 in two lines running at right angles to the altar. The head
Lama, or Dorje Lopōn, has a rough sort of seat on which he,
too, sits cross-legged. This, however, is raised a little above
the level of the floor.

346 The main hall takes up most of the ground floor, but at one
788 end there is a room, only about nine feet wide, which in
778 addition to a small altar, complete with image, houses three
enormous prayer-drums, which ring a bell each time they are turned completely round. These drums, or perhaps barrels would be a better word, are about ten feet high, and each is completely filled with strips of paper on which the magic formula *Om mane padme hum* has been written over and over again. One turn of the drum is equivalent to uttering this mystic sentence the same number of times that it has been written on the paper within. When one has nothing better to do, therefore, a quiet half-hour of turning a giant prayer-wheel is as good a means of acquiring merit as any other. People would often drop in at odd moments to do this.

778 The largest of the three drums had a rather elaborate top that projected through the ceiling into a small room above, which we used as a bathroom. This top was decorated with a muslin flounce of red, blue, and yellow and looked something like a rather dirty ballet skirt. When the drum was turned

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*The term Lama should rightly only be applied to a monk who has reached a certain definite standing in the Buddhist church by reason of his learning and piety. It is extremely doubtful if anyone in Lingtem has any claim to this title; but since the term is commonly, though quite incorrectly, used by most Western writers to denote any Lamaist monk, and since the Lepchas themselves use it in this way, I have decided to follow the general practice.

from below the top would also revolve; and if one happened 778
to be having a bath at the same time the effect was rather
startling until we grew accustomed to expect it. A flange
projected from the rim of the drum, and this struck a bell at
every turn, thus enabling the worshipper to keep a count, for
it would be unwise to finish with an inauspicious number.
It had a tinkling sound like the bell in a village shop; and I
had only to hear it to be immediately transported to the
English countryside.

The upper storey was reached by an outside staircase and 346
contained three rooms. The largest was more or less identical
with the main hall below, and also contained an altar, [778]
complete with images and books. There were also several
fearsome-looking masks, said to represent Lord Konchen,
which were used for dances. This room was used as a general [285]
store-room: in one corner were a number of printing blocks [213]
and apparatus for making paper, also odds and ends of
ceremonial equipment, coloured umbrellas, peacocks'
feathers, and such-like. Some of the pillars were roughly [532]
carved, and decorated with crudely coloured dragon
designs. The ceiling was unplastered, and on the beams
above a number of immense copper vessels and cooking pots [415]
were stored. This was our bedroom, and it always reminded
me of the backstage of a theatre set for a Christmas pantomime.
It would never have surprised me to see a *Corps de
Ballet* come tripping into the room; and when the light was
put out the last thing one saw, before dropping off to sleep,
was the gilded face of the large central Buddha faintly
gleaming in the light of the flickering wick. In the morning
we would usually awake to the pattering sound of a bare- [792]
footed novice, whose duty it was to refill the seven altar-bowls
with water.

There was another small room, little bigger than a cell, 346
which was used by certain monks for the purpose of private 792
meditation. It was only about nine feet square, and its
olitary window was heavily swathed in sacking, so as to
xclude every particle of light. From time to time one

346 special Lama would come and meditate alone in this
792 completely darkened room. He would sometimes intone for hours at a stretch, accompanying his prayers on the cymbals and drum. After several hours of this rhythmical banging one's nerves would come near to breaking point. The only
793 thing then was to go for a solitary walk. This particular form of devotion is known as *Kongso Klong*, or the "sending away of Devils," and this was the name we eventually gave to its chief exponent. I later discovered that our presence in the monastery was thought to call for redoubled efforts in this direction, but I was not prepared for what happened on the day of my final departure. On this occasion Kongso Klong appeared before me with the usual present of eggs. I thought he had merely come to say good-bye, and was somewhat astonished when the others told me that he demanded ten rupees "for services rendered." This I paid.

346 Between the Kongso room and our bedroom was a short
[372] passage, which contained a large open fire-place for cooking.
114 This was identical with that in the ordinary living house, but during our time it was never used. For dining-room we had a tent. This was pitched outside the small house adjoining the monastery, which served both as kitchen and
888 living quarters for our servants. It was normally occupied by Pong Ring, a snuffling old gentleman and almost blind. He was a sort of verger and was supposed to keep the monastery clean and to tend its tiny garden. All this, however, was far beyond him and he seldom appeared. Sometimes on sunny days he would drag himself painfully down and would totter senilely round the building, at the same time turning his prayer-wheel and wheezing like a pug. When he felt up to it he would take a turn at the giant drums and his accompanying prayers sounded to me like the swarming of bees. Everyone treated him kindly; but the poor old man had outlived his time. He said he had once had a wife, but never a child to look after him in his extreme old age. Sometimes, when we were talking to others, he would pause in his circumambulations and stare

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Pong Ring, the monastery verger.

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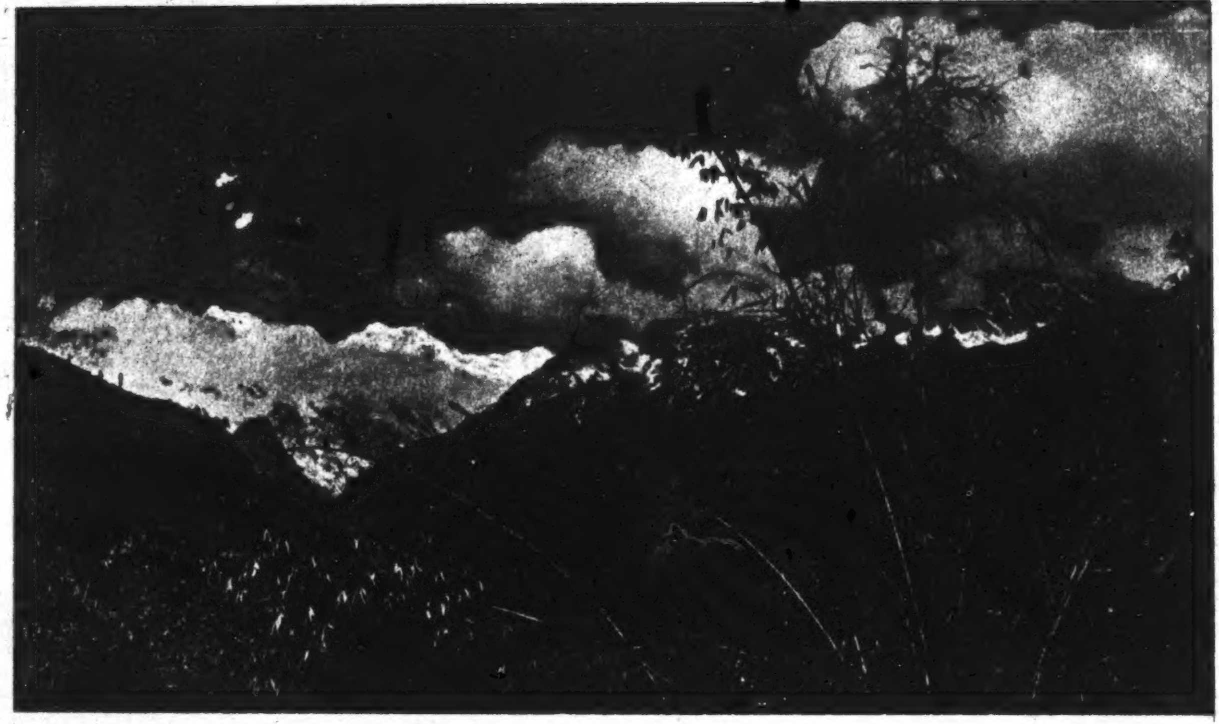
Grandmother, with the evening's supply of drinks.

[facing p. 22]

[facing p.23]



Looking west from the monastery, with my favourite tree in the foreground, and Kinchinjunga in the background.

888 at us with his rheumy eyes. His brain was too far gone to take in much of what was said and after making a remark, which was a sinister meaningless croak rather than human speech, he would totter off again to add a few more turns to his credit. He always reminded me of a desiccated old colonel: perhaps in some previous incarnation he had snored away long hours in some comfortable London club. Anyhow, I like to think so.

136 Lingtem Monastery has no permanent inmates. It does, however, harbour large colonies of rats and fleas. I thought at first that the nightly scufflings might be some form of psychic disturbance; and as for the fleas, once one had been thoroughly bitten they ceased to cause further annoyance.

133 The view from the monastery is, in my opinion, unparalleled
anywhere in the Himalaya. The building faces
due north, and directly in front of us, on the far side of the
river, was a splendidly wooded ridge, the top of which was
still under snow when we first arrived. Away to the left we
had an uninterrupted view of the Kinchinjunga peaks, with
the top of Seniolchum just visible a little to one side. This
in itself was a sufficiently remarkable sight: but away to
the right we also had a clear view of all the peaks forming
the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. In the centre of
those was Pau-hunri, here called Nahrem Hlo, and thought
823 to be the loom of Nazong Nyu, a mythical personage who
appears in many Lepcha stories.

788 Outside the monastery was a row of prayer-flags, and a
351 number of small prayer-drums had been let into one of the
walls. These could be turned by the pious whenever they
circled round the building. A little below was a small
bamboo grove, which contained one particularly handsome
tree, which I would sometimes watch for hours at a stretch,
322 especially when the weather was stormy. Why, I wondered,
137 do we use the wood of this most beautiful of all trees to make
the most hideous of all furniture? The Lepcha uses a great
deal of bamboo in one way and another, but in his hands
the finished product never looks shoddy and ugly. On

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with
incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding
a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with
[28] yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper.
There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange
trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge
umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into
spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora,
we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with
wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter
scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem
means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the
perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The
place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground
is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a
hundred yards or so in any direction without going either
[36] steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in
the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from
one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred
feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and
[16] a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls.
These thirty-three houses were spread about over several
square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more
than three or four grouped together. The grouping was
entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships:
a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile
away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had
just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built
on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less
importance than the selection of a spot that was free from
evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the
527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of
796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month
there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangen which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

spend most of our time with such of the people as were really willing to talk. One or two were genuinely interested in their history and customs and with them we spent most of our days.

I had been taught at Cambridge to avoid asking questions: the ideal method was so to observe and absorb a culture that mere questioning became almost superfluous. It was essential to live in close contact with the people. In our particular case, however, this was not possible. Even had we chosen to live with a Lepcha family we should have been in no better position to observe what was happening at the other end of the village: its very grouping militated against working in ideal conditions, however long we stayed. When we got to know the people better we did of course visit them in their houses, and were always present when a ceremony was being performed. There is much to be said for "going native" and I have always envied those whose digestions can stand it. The alternative method, however, does permit one to see things from a completely detached standpoint, whereas the "native" soon learns to take many things for granted. After all, how many of us could explain our own culture to a Lepcha, for instance, in such a way that nothing was taken for granted?

We would usually start a conversation on some selected topic; but once an informant was well away we let him have his head. Thus, we might start with war and finish with abortion: all was grist for the ethnological mill. The following account is built up from such oddments of information; an uncompleted jigsaw with doubtless many pieces wrongly placed. Its main pattern, I hope, is clear, but I make no claim to be infallible. In any case I must again remind the reader that this is a purely personal account, tinged with my likes and dislikes. I have tried as far as possible to be objective; but like Mr. Dick I, too, have my King Charles's head.

CHAPTER 2

HIMALAYAN HOTCH-POTCH: AN ANTHOLOGY OF SIKKIM

The country.

"SIKKIM—Native State in the Eastern Himalayas, 131 with an area of 2,818 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Tibet; on the south-east by Bhutan; and on the south by Darjeeling District; and on the west by Nepal. The Tibetan name for Sikkim is pronounced Denjong, and more rarely Demjong or Demoshong; and the people are called *Rong-pa*, or 'dwellers in the valleys,' the term *Mom-pa*, or 'dwellers in the low country,' being used occasionally to describe the Lepcha inhabitants."

Gazetteer of India, Vol. 22. 1908.

The climate.

"The climate varies between the tropical heat of the valleys 132 and the Alpine cold of the snowy ranges. The rainfall is very heavy, averaging 137 inches annually at Gangtok. From November to February the rainfall is light, and the weather in November and December is clear and fine. In March thunderstorms commence and, growing more and more frequent, usher in the rainy season, which lasts till October."

Ibid.

Encouragement for the timid traveller.

"Even in the most remote regions of Sikkim one's personal 574 safety is assured, for the inhabitants are a peaceful and 609 hospitable folk, and on this point even the most nervous need have no fear. Ladies travelling by themselves may undertake expeditions to the furthermost bungalows, without being subjected to the least inconvenience, their *sirdar* or headman [622] always regarding their protection as his own personal charge.

491 As for the roads, these, including the bridges, are all easily negotiable by the most timid. Those of active habit may walk all the marches without excessive fatigue, the more leisurely-inclined may ride on ponies, readily obtainable from Darjeeling, while ladies, not equal to the exertion, may be carried in dandies over all the bungalow routes."

Tours in Sikkim.

Awful influence of the Lakeland poets.

000 "For persons travelling solely for pleasure, and without any specific hobby, the visions of the snows, the ever-changing effects of light and shadow on the frost-clad mountains, the fragrant air of the woodlands, or the life-giving breezes of the mountain-tops will be joys sufficient in themselves, while those interested in any special pursuit such as sketching, photography, botany, natural history, etc., will find Sikkim an ideal field for these occupations."

Ibid.

Sikkim can be particularly recommended for the study of "etc.," which, I must confess, is my chosen hobby.

You have been warned!

"Ladies will find woollen knickers or combinations a comfort when crossing the higher passes."

Ibid.

How to travel.

PART I. PROFESSIONAL.

"It will be found most satisfactory to walk down hill and ride up, a method of progression best for man and beast. The *syces* should be made to follow close, and they may carry light things such as hand-cameras, field-glasses, waterproofs and articles which may be required from time to time on the march. A halt for lunch may be made at any pretty or convenient place, and the tiffin-coolie should be able to make all the arrangements for an alfresco meal. He should never be far away while on the march, and a good man will understand this and follow accordingly. In case of accident, however, the traveller may carry an emergency ration of plain chocolate in his pocket. A small collapsible cup for drinking purposes, carried in the pocket, may be useful on warm marches, while a *chagal* (water-bottle), slung on the *syce*, may be considered. A spirit-lamp outfit will soon boil a kettle of tea, but the tiffin-man will make a fire and boil the water in almost the same time. A quicker plan still is to bring hot tea in a 'Thermos' flask; it is then ready at once. To prevent this being broken it should be kept in a padded bag stuffed with coconut coir and drawn in at the top with a tape. After lunch the coolie will generally roughly wash up and pack, while his master proceeds on the march. To save expense it is possible to do without the tiffin-coolie and take sandwiches and cake, etc., in a small packet to be carried by the *syce*.

"In ordinary circumstances the destination should be reached about tea-time, and if fine and warm you may have this meal on the veranda, while looking out on the new prospect. If you should arrive ahead of the coolies, the cook and tiffin-coolie will certainly be present, and tea will soon be available, provided these two men are up to the mark. If not too tired you may explore the neighbourhood until dark, and then order dinner. A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in, and 'so to bed.' The *sirdar* may come in for orders for the morrow or to ask about the food, and if his day's work has been satisfactory he may be rewarded with the equivalent of 'you have done very well,' which will please him, before he retires for the night."

Ibid.

PART 2. AMATEUR.

"Wet to the skin, and almost starving, having had nothing but chocolate to eat since our meagre *chota haziree* in the morning, we sat down on the wet rug to await the coolies. It was about 5 p.m., and we had over two hours to wait.

000 Nazir had forgotten or lost the matches entrusted to him, and we could get neither light nor fire. The best part of the time was spent in trying native dodges to obtain a spark, in which D. took an active interest, but the wood was not the right kind, and was, besides, so wet that nothing could be done. Toomhang, the Lepcha, was with us, as he always preferred to be when not actually ordered to keep with and bring up the coolies as he should have done, but we liked gossiping with the fine old man, who was of much too gentle a nature to be a coolie driver. When he told us there would be at least five feet of snow on Tiphu at our last camping ground, by the morning, we knew he was right, and consoled ourselves for all our troubles at the thought of the happy escape we had had."

FLORENCE DONALDSON, 1900.

The roads.

"The *pugdandy* (footpath) now led us up the hill, and the hard climbing we had to do helped to take my thoughts off an experience calculated to unnerve one. In some places
447 we had to scale a projecting rock by means of two pieces of the trunk of a tree with notches at alternate intervals to put one's feet in. This Sikkim style of Jacob's ladder is well enough for the barefooted native, but not at all easy for the leather-shod European. I had looped up my habit skirt before starting, but found it very much in the way all the morning." (But you would probably have found it easier walking in those woollen knickers.)

Ibid.

Sikkim bungalows (*old style*).

486 "There were two rooms in the curiously constructed rest-house; the floor and roof being of the same material and as fragile as the walls. We had to take off our boots before we could walk on the yielding floor. Our camp bedsteads would have gone through it, so our bedding was spread on the raised floor which had all the effect of a spring bed,

142
291
284

Lepcha boy.

000

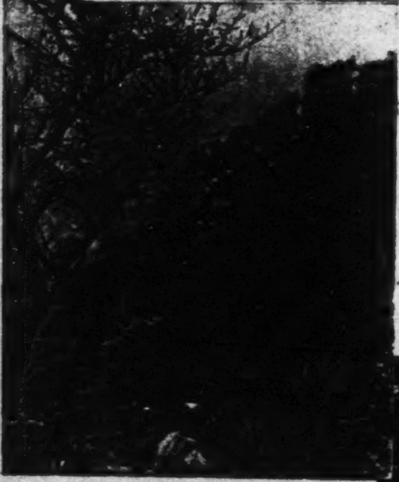
"A little reading or writing according to taste may then be indulged in"; being otherwise a candid portrait of the author. (*Photograph by F. S. Smythe, reproduced by permission of the Mount Everest Committee,* 1936).

[Facing p. 30]

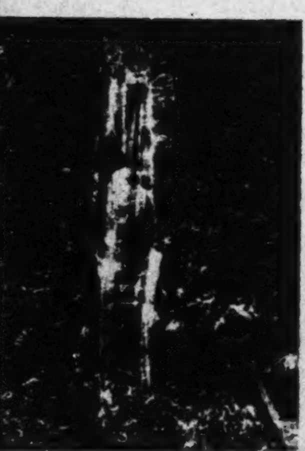
136

Tree fern.

133



Hillside in Sikhim.



Waterfall in the Talung.

[facing p. 31]

485 though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fireplace to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little
136 horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

792 "There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the
346 Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the
[77] outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to
792 the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,

792 and neither threats nor baksheesh would induce the guilty one to return them.

"The name of the monastery signifies 'the sublime and perfect lotus!' It seemed rather a den of corruption and degradation, and it was with infinite relief that we turned from the ugliness devised by man to the perfect beauty of the surrounding scene."

Ibid.

An attraction for the animal lover.

000 "The Talung monastery has a Llama [*sic*] permanently in charge who will make travellers welcome at his lonely abode."

Tours in Sikkim.

671 *Some extracts from the Sixteen Laws of Sikkim:* said to be founded on those spoken by Raja Melong-dong, who is believed to have lived in India before the time of Buddha (approx. 900 B.C.). They are said to apply "only to such uncivilised people as Bhuteas, Lepchas, and Mongolians, who know no law":

Instructions for those who are being defeated and cannot fight.

671
726 "When a fort is surrounded those inside should remain quiet and should show no fear. They should not fire off their arms uselessly, with no hope of hitting the enemy. The well within the fort should be most carefully guarded. Those within the fort should not be allowed to communicate with the enemy for fear of treachery. They must not be lazy. Until peace is declared the messenger should receive no reward.

671
727 "Should you be defeated, you must give up your arms, and those who give them up must not be killed. Should anyone kill a man who has given up his arms he must be derided and scoffed at as a coward.

"If during the conflict you capture a general or officer of rank, you should bind his hands in front with a silken

scarf; he should be allowed to ride his own horse or another 671
good horse, and should be treated well, so that in the event 727
of your ever falling into his hands he may treat you well also. Any other prisoners should have their hands tied behind them, and they should be made to walk. Officers should be placed on old, worn-out horses, with broken harness and rope stirrups. Should an army be defeated and obliged to fly, they should not be reprimanded, but they should not be rewarded or receive any presents, even though the leader be a great man. The prisoners should receive what is necessary for subsistence, and also expenses for religious ceremonies, and men of rank should be treated well and with consideration.

"A man can only make a treaty for himself and his own descendants."

Concerning murder.

"The price for killing a gentleman who has 300 servants, 671
or a superintendent of a district, or a lama professor, is 300 682
to 400 gold srang. For full lamas, Government officers, and 554
gentlemen with 100 servants the fine is 200 oz. of gold.

"For killing gentlemen who possess a horse and five or six servants, or working lamas the fine is 145 to 150 oz. of gold.

"For killing men with no rank, old lamas, or personal servants the fine is 80 oz. of gold.

"For killing common people and for villagers the price is 30 to 40 oz. of gold.

"For killing a man who has done good work for Government the fine is 50 to 70 oz. of gold.

"For killing unmarried men, servants, and butchers the price is 30 gold srang; and for killing blacksmiths and beggars, 10 to 20 oz. of gold.

"On the price being paid a letter must be written and a 671
copy given to each party saying that everything has been 682
settled. If a case is reopened a fine must be paid by him who opens the case. The murderer must write to the effect

671 that he will not commit such a crime again. Part of the fine
682 can be given towards the funeral expenses of the deceased."

Ordeal by oil.

671 "The oil must be supplied by the Government and must
695 be of the finest quality. It is boiled in a pan at least three inches deep. In the oil a black stone and a white stone are placed, of equal size and weight. He who has taken the oath must first wash his hands in water, in milk, and in widow's urine. His hand is then bound in a cloth and sealed. This is done a day or two before the ordeal, in order to give him a chance of confessing. The vessel with the boiling oil is then placed so that the stones cannot be seen, and he has to take one out. If he takes out the white one without any burn he wins his case. He who gets the black stone is sure to be burnt, and loses his case. Should he who gets the white stone be slightly burnt, it means that he has partially spoken the truth, and wins half his case."

Concerning adultery.

671 "For violating a woman of different position 3 oz. of gold
684 have to be paid to the woman's relations, and 4 gold srang to Government, besides many things in kind.

"For violation of a woman of the same position as the man 2 or 3 gold srang and several articles in kind must be paid.

"If the woman goes of her own accord to the man he has only to pay 1 gold srang and three kinds of articles.

"Should one man's wife entice another married man to go with her, she has to pay seven kinds of things in kind.

"Should a man and a woman cohabit on a journey there is no fine."

Concerning the Lepchas.

144 "The Lepcha is the aboriginal inhabitant of Sikkim, and the prominent character in Darjeeling, where he undertakes all sorts of outdoor employment. The race to which he belongs is a very singular one; markedly Mongolian in

features, and a good deal too, by imitation, in habit; still 144
he differs from his Tibetan prototype, though not so decidedly
as from the Nepalese and Bhutanese, between whom he is
hemmed into a narrow tract of mountain country, barely
sixty miles in breadth.

"An attentive examination of the Lepcha in one respect 157
entirely contradicts our preconceived notions of a mountaineer,
as he is timid, peaceful and no brawler; qualities
which are all the more remarkable from contrasting so
strongly with those of his neighbours to the east and west:
of whom the Gurkhas are brave and warlike to a proverb,
and the Bhutanese quarrelsome, cowardly, and cruel (this
statement is altogether unfair to the latter and in no way
true). A group of Lepchas is exceedingly picturesque. They 142
are of short stature—four feet eight inches to five feet; rather
broad in the chest, and with muscular arms, but small hands
and slender wrists. The face is broad, flat, and of eminently
Tartar character, flat-nosed, oblique-eyed, with no beard,
and a little moustache. The lower limbs are powerfully
developed, befitting genuine mountaineers: the feet are
small. Though never really handsome, and very womanish
in the cast of countenance, they have invariably a mild,
frank, and even engaging expression, which I have in vain
sought to analyse, and which is perhaps due more to the
absence of anything unpleasing than to the presence of
direct grace or beauty. . . . Indolence, when left to them- 157
selves, is their besetting sin; they detest any fixed employ- 515
ment, and their foulness of person and garments renders
them disagreeable inmates: in this rainy climate they are
supportable out of doors. . . . In disposition they are 157
amiable and obliging, frank, humorous, and polite, without
the servility of the Hindoos; and their address is free and
unconstrained. Their intercourse with one another and with [576]
Europeans is scrupulously honest; a present is divided
equally amongst many, without a syllable of discontent or
grudging look or word: each, on receiving his share, coming
up and giving the donor a brusque bow and thanks. They 000

437 They have learnt to overcharge already, and use extortion in dealing, as is the custom with the people of the plains; but it is clumsily done, and never accompanied with the grasping air and insufferable whine of the latter.

157 "A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that while away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bareheaded and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, collect or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentatious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress."

HOOKER, 1854. A very accurate estimate.

A sentimental Colonel sums up the Lepchas.

000 "What or wheresoever might have been their original source, the Lepchas here appeared in the most simple, primitive state, living in the midst of the vast, wild, magnificent forests, old as the hills themselves, and, as I think, I mention to you, each family residing by itself, having no villages or communities, and but little intercourse with each other; thus they dwelt in pretty cottages, around which they
771 cultivated their plot of ground. Their religion was particularly simple; they believed in one Good Spirit, and in innumerable evil spirits; to the former they conceived their worship due, and to Him they offered their prayers and thanksgivings; the latter they considered prowled about, and haunted every spot; to them they attributed whatever

sickness or misfortune befell, therefore deemed it requisite 771
to propitiate them, which they did by offerings of rice, etc.
The first fruits of the season were always offered to the Good
Spirit. I may state that the purity of their belief was, at a
period antecedent to our arrival, somewhat perverted by
the introduction from Tibet of the Buddist religion; it has,
and still has, however, but little hold on them. . . .

"The British Government has again conferred on the 636
Sikkim ruler an annual and larger allowance, to be enjoyed 177
as long as order is maintained in his dominions. Since then
the country has become more tranquil and, as far as the
snows (but no farther), is again thrown open to visitors.
Sikkim, however, is fast deteriorating. The influx of the
Bhutias has increased, and the power of the Buddhists has
become firmly established; the Gurkhas have also commenced to settle in it, and the grandest and most glorious
scenery in the world is becoming completely destroyed. With
he destruction of the forests in Sikkim, the charm of the
country will pass away, the climate will change, and unless
peedy measures be taken to prevent it, the Lepchas will
pine, and in time cease to exist. Much more might be said,
but enough has been represented to account for the
deplorable fall of the Lepchas.

"Of the language I cannot speak too highly. The simple 192
and primitive state in which the Lepchas lived is admirably
hown. It has no primary words (beyond the words for gold
nd silver) to express money, merchants or merchandise,
airs or markets. Their peaceful and gentle character is
vinced by their numerous terms of tenderness and com- [195]
assion, and by the fact that not one word of abuse exists
n their language. . . . Of all the almost inconceivable 824
liversity of trees with which the hills are covered; of all the 82
lmost incalculable variety of plants and flowers with which
he forests are filled; the Lepchas can tell you the names of
ll, they can distinguish at a glance the difference in the
pecies of each genus of plants, which would require the
kill of a practised botanist to perceive; and this information

824 and nomenclature extend to beasts, birds, to insects, and to
82 everything around them, animate and inanimate. The trees
and the flowers, and the birds, and the insects have heretofore been their friends and companions. But now, this
000 simple knowledge, this beautiful language, this once happy
people are fast dying out. The Lepchas have left their woods and innocence and have fallen into sin and misery, and is there no one that will help them, no one that will save them?" MAINWARING. 1876.

But the forest is still there: the good Colonel forgot the effects of that 137 inches of rain a year!

The Secretary of State for India, when Governor of Bengal, visits the Lepchas.

000 "We were entering a country reserved for the Lepchas, a stumpy, flat-faced people with sallow complexions and matted black hair, just such gnomes as one would look for in the sombre depths of an enchanted forest. And their impersonation of the part was perfect when, as not infrequently happened, they emerged unexpectedly from the forest armed with bows and arrows. And as if this was not enough, the attendants thoughtfully detailed by His Highness the Maharaja to accompany us, were garbed in a manner one would look for in no one but a woodland elf."

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY
(now Marquess of Zetland), 1923.

A modern opinion by one who has worked among the Lepchas for fifty years.

"You ask me what I think of the Lepchas as compared with the other hill peoples—the Tibetans and the Nepalese. As I have told you, they appeal to me more than do the others. I'll give you a few instances of individuals and groups. I am, of course, conscious that one is apt to be prejudiced in favour of people we personally like, and to forget that among all races there are outstanding individuals who are exceptions to the general rule; but I'll do my best to be judicious.

"I begin with my personal servant Changzhi, whom I have 157
had for twenty-five years. His father was the first servant we engaged on first coming to Kalimpong. In almost every characteristic he was an older edition of the son. He was with us until his death in 1912, when the son, then at the plough, succeeded him. The first characteristic of Changzhi is his honesty and truthfulness. In all these years I have never known him tell a lie to me or take anything that was not his own. I have never kept anything locked up from him, nor in matters of money kept an account of what I have entrusted to him: he did that. He would never take anything for himself without being told by me to do so, and I have known him disobey me in this in cases when he thought it was for my interest to keep something a little longer. I have, of course, known Lepcha servants who could not have been treated in this way; but I believe that Europeans in our district trust the Lepchas generally. If they fail, I believe that it is not infrequently through taking alcoholic liquors. On the other hand, I have known Nepalese domestics who have been quite trustworthy. The failures have been more numerous than among the Lepchas, and here again drink [733]
has been still more frequently the cause. Among the young Nepali men in the towns, it is pathetic how many who had promising futures have been ruined through drink.

"Another characteristic of the Lepchas is their generous 241
and charitable nature: Changzhi shares this to the full. The 574
fact that they lived an isolated life among the forests of the 735
Himalayas before the Nepalese invaded their sanctuary made them interdependent. They were not good farmers and their agricultural implements were primitive. Their dependence upon forest roots and fruits, which were got free by the labour of their hands, encouraged the gospel of sharing; and they share everything. Shortly after we came to India we tried by our 'Young Men's Society' to develop an interest in social questions. One night the subject was debt and the cause of it among the Lepchas. One man said that in his opinion it arose through their stomachs: 'In the

241 olden days our fathers got their food from the forest; but
574 times change; forest regulations were framed against us, and
735 we had to buy our food. When friends called we could not refrain from sharing what we had with them, with the result that our year's store got consumed before the new crop was ready, and we had to go to the mahajan's shop and take it from him at an exorbitant rate of interest; and before we realised it we had become his slaves for life. There were no government rules against disposing of our land to others. We Lepchas were poor and we had to sell to the more thrifty Nepalese at a ridiculously low price.'

241 "That is how much of the Lepchas' land was acquired
425 by Nepalese. Rules preventing the transfer to Nepalese except by the personal ruling of the Deputy Commissioner have largely stopped this evil. The Lepchas, however, have learned much from the Nepalese as to the tillage of the land, and many of them are now quite as good farmers as their instructors.

484 "Another incident occurs to me from the 'Young Men's'
415 meetings on much the same subject. The point I would give
574 is on the reasons why the Nepalese are still, as then, more thrifty than the Lepchas. One young man said: 'Have you ever seen the different sizes of the cooking vessels used by the Lepchas and the Nepalese on a journey? The Lepcha carries one which could cook for a family and will share with any fellow-traveller in need: the Nepali carried a little pot just sufficient for his own use; and even if his father were beside him he would not ask him to take a little.'

"This was doubtless an exaggeration; but speaking generally it does reveal an undoubted difference between the two peoples.

782 "Another fruitful cause of poverty among the Lepchas is
[735] their sacrifice of cattle and fowls on the advice of their priests in times of illness. Until that is stopped by the deliverance from the fear of evil spirits the Lepchas will remain poor. I have known it in times of prolonged and frequent illness in a family that every animal they have was

given in sacrifice; and, in addition, a promise given that 782 when they are in a position to keep the pledge they will give the required animals to the spirits. No one will dare to break the pledge until he is freed from this wasteful superstition."

Personal communication from the Very Rev. Dr. J. A. GRAHAM, C.I.E., D.D. 1937.

Missionary influence: a letter from a Christian Lepcha girl 600 thanking a friend for a present.

"Kalimpong,
"10/9/37.

"DEAR MISTER SAHIB,—

"Many many thanks for your affectionate parcel, which I received yesterday through a Chaprasi. By testing that parcel of an egg, I nearly fainted down, but I myself illustretted [*sic*] my heart. I hope you will be my ever provider. I hope for four dozen eggs of such kinds.

"Please excuse me for my mistake.

"Cheery You!
"Your ever helpless,
"J. M. Lepchani.

"P.S.—If you will not give the reply of this letter then and there I shall seldom write you again."

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CHAPTER 3

A Strange Mixture of Fact and Fiction: being a Brief History of Sikkim

161 SIKKIM has a population of close on 110,000, of whom 25,780 are said to be Lepchas of one sort or another; but this figure does not distinguish the very large number of men who have intermarried with women of other tribes and whose offspring are accordingly no longer to be reckoned as pure Lepchas. There are no accurate figures available of the total pure Lepcha population of Sikkim, but I imagine it to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13,000. What can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, is that this number is steadily decreasing year by year. The reasons for this are at present not clear to me; but I believe the principal cause to be contact of the easy-going and extremely non-materialistic Lepchas with the excessively virile, more thrifty and individualistic Gurkhas. The latter, finding insufficient land in their own country, are ever seeking for fresh places in which to settle; and during the process the Lepchas have been to a great extent absorbed or at least driven further and further into the hills. The settlement of Gurkhas and others in Sikkim is now controlled; but the Lepchas have already decreased to such an extent that legislation can now do no more than retard their complete extinction, that is, as a separate tribe, for a
[144 few years longer. They claim to be the original inhabitants
197] of Sikkim. They are of Mongoloid appearance and speak a language which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group.

173 The early history of Sikkim is mainly based on Lepcha
797 oral tradition, but the reigning family seems to have been from the first Tibetan. The Tibetan form of Buddhism, generally known as Lamaism, is believed to have been

ntroduced into the country about the middle of the seventeenth century by Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo, the patron saint of Sikkim. 173 797

Lha-Tsun is so intimately connected with the local form of Lamaism, figures so frequently in the strange hotch-potch of fact and fiction that passes for history, that it is essential to give some details of his life, so far as they are known. 175

Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo is a Tibetan title meaning "The great reverend god." His ordinary religious name is Kun-zan num-gye, or "The entirely victorious essence of goodness"; but he is also known by the title of Lha-tsun num kha Jig-may, or "the reverend god who fears not the sky." This is with reference to his alleged power of flying. He has yet another name, being sometimes referred to as Kusho Dsog-ch'en Ch'em-bo, or "The great and honourable Dsog-ch'en," the latter part of which name means literally "The great end," this being the technical name for the particular system of mysticism practised by the Nin-ma-pa sect, of which he was a member. Kusho means merely "the honourable," and is the title by which all persons of position are addressed in Tibet.

He was born in the fire-bird year of the tenth of the sixty-year cycles, corresponding to A.D. 1595, in the district of Kongbu, in south-eastern Tibet. Having spent many years in various monasteries and in travelling through Tibet and Sikkim, he eventually arrived in Lhasa in 1648, where he obtained such repute by his learning that he attracted the favourable notice of one Nag-wan, the greatest of the Grand Lamas, who shortly afterwards became the first of the so-called Dalai Lamas. Indeed, it is said that it was mainly through the special instructions given by Lha-tsun to the Grand Lama that the latter was so favourably treated by the Emperor of China and confirmed in the temporal rule of Tibet.

The detailed account of the saint's meeting with Nag-wan is worth citing as an example of the curious blend of the crude and the marvellous, of which most of these indigenous narratives are composed.

175 In the year previous to that in which the fifth Grand Lama went to China, probably about A.D. 1649, the Grand Lama told his attendants that he had dreamt a sage would visit him that day. Should he do so he was at once to be admitted to the presence. Lha-tsun, arriving at the site now named Pargo-K'alin, immediately below the Potala, the Dalai Lama's palace, blew loudly a *kalin*, or trumpet made from a human thigh-bone; but the castle guard, in ignorance of Lha-tsun's identity, seized him and tied him to the Do-ring monolith as a punishment for daring to trumpet so close to the palace. The saint, however, soon caused the whole hill of Potala to shake, and by this means his arrival was brought to the notice of the Grand Lama, who ordered his instant release and admission.

On coming into the presence of the Grand Lama he walked boldly up and struck the latter with his fist and then vomited before him, much to the astonishment and disgust of the attendant courtiers. The saint then explained his action: "You are shortly going to China," he said; "and on the way a great danger awaits you, but my striking you has rid you of that danger. In China you will find yourself in great peril some day. When that happens consult this paper which I now give you, and you will be relieved. My vomiting in your presence means that you will ultimately be invested with great power and riches through my good offices."

The dilemma prophesied at this time turned out to be a query posed by the Emperor of China regarding the "essence of the rainbow colour," which quite confounded the Grand Lama. But he suddenly remembered the episode with the saint, consulted the paper, and found that it contained the required information. He so astonished the Emperor by the sagacity of his reply that he loaded him with honours and riches. The Grand Lama, on his return from China, offered Lha-tsun much treasure as a reward for the services he had rendered: this, however, the saint refused.

Previous to his visit to Lhasa it is said that the saint, ccompanied by a few disciples, journeyed to the south-west f Tibet, saying: "According to the prophecy of Guru impoche I must go and open the northern gate of the hidden country of the rice-valleys,' De-mo-jong, meaning ikkim; and I must develop that country religiously." He hen proceeded by way of Shigatse and Sakya to Zar, a hort distance to the north of Tashi-rab-ka near the Nepal rontier, where he founded a monastery.

He next attempted to enter Sikkim by way of Jongri, but ould find no path, and remained for many days in a cave, he name of which means "the very pleasant grove," near an-la nan-ma. There "the everlasting summit of the five epositories of snow," the mountain god Konchen, transormed himself into a wild goose and conversed with the age; and here, according to the prophecy of Guru Rimpoche, e composed the book named "The Complete Book of Vorship and Offerings for Kinchinjunga."

At this time another Lama, of the Kar-tok-pa sub-sect, ame searching for a path into Sikkim. He tried, without uccess, the so-called "Monkey-back rock" (with reference o its semblance to a monkey sitting with its hands behind s back), and then the road from Jongri; but having reached he cave of "the very pleasant grove" he fell in with the aint, who told him that since he was not destined to open the northern gate" he should go round and try the western ntrance.

Lha-tsun then flew miraculously to the upper part of Mount Kabru, where once again he blew his *kalin:* and after n interval of two weeks he flew down to where his servants vere collected and guided them to Norbu-gang in Sikkim.

Soon after this there arrived two other *Nin-ma* Lamas. y way of "the western gate" of Singalila came the Karok-pa Lama already mentioned, whose name was "The Great Soul," and a Lama of the Na-dak-pa sect named The Great Sage," who had opened "the southern gate" by vay of Darjeeling and Namchi. The place where these three Lamas met was afterwards called by the Lepchas Yok-sam, 175 which means "(the place of) the three superior ones."

The three Lamas now held council together, at which Lha-tsun said: "We three Lamas have reached a new and irreligious country. We must have a 'dispenser of gifts,' a king, to rule the country on our behalf." To this the Na-dak-pa Lama replied: "I am descended from the celebrated Terton Na-dak Nan-rel, who was himself a king; I should therefore be the king here." But the Kar-tok-pa Lama would have none of this. "Since I too am of royal lineage I have the right to rule," he said. But to this Lha-tsun now replied: "I should tell you that according to the prophecy of the Guru Rimpoche it is written that four noble brothers shall meet in Sikkim and there arrange for its government. We are three of these, having come respectively from the north, west, and south. Towards the east, so it is written, there is at this time a man named Pun-tsok, a descendant of the brave people of Kham, a province of Eastern Tibet; and according to the prophecy of the Master we should invite him to join us."

Two messengers were then dispatched to search for this Pun-tsok. Going towards the east of Sikkim they arrived at Gangtok, where they saw a man churning milk and asked him his name. He did not reply, but invited them to sit down, after which he gave them milk to drink. After they were somewhat refreshed the man said that his name was Pun-tsok. He was then conducted to the Lamas, who crowned him by placing the holy water-vase upon his head and anointed him with the water. They exhorted him to rule the country religiously and gave him Lha-tsun's own surname of Num-gye, with the additional title of "The great religious king."

Pun-tsok was at this time aged thirty-eight and he became a Lama in the same year. This was about A.D. 1641.

Lha-tsun spent the greater part of the rest of his life in Sikkim, exploring its caves and mountain recesses, composing its Lamaist legends, and fixing sites for temples and monastories. He first built a hut at Dub-de, which afterwards

became the monastery of that name. He is also believed to 175
have founded shrines at Tashiding, Pemiongchi, and Sang-na-ch'o-ling; but others assert that Tashiding was first occupied by the Na-dak-pa Lama.

Lha-tsun is usually represented as seated on a leopard-skin 532
mat with the right leg hanging down and his body almost 175
bare, one of his titles being He-ru-ka-pa, which means unclad. His complexion is of a dark blue hue; but he is otherwise somewhat like his prototype, the Guru Rimpoche. A chaplet of skulls encircles his brow; and in his left hand is a skull-cup filled with blood, and a trident topped with human heads rests in front of the left shoulder. The right hand is in the traditional teaching attitude.

He is believed to be the incarnation of the great Indian teacher Bhima Mitra: and he himself is held to have been subsequently incarnated twice as a Sikkim Lama, the last reincarnation being Jigmi Pa-wo, who was born at Ok-ja-ling, near Sakya, who built the present monastery at Pemiongchi.

The place and manner of his death are apparently unknown; but he is currently reported to have died in Sikkim of fever contracted while on a visit to India. The dark livid hue of his skin is said to be due to his death from a malignant fever. His chief object in visiting India was, according to a popular saying, to obtain a rare variety of ruddy leopard-skin, such as is highly prized by Hindu ascetics as a mat.

All his clothing and personal effects are carefully treasured 778
in Sikkim and worshipped as most sacred relics. They were stored at Pemiongchi monastery until the time of the Gurkha invasion in the last century, when, for greater safety, most of them were taken to the remote Talung monastery.

At Pemiongchi one complete set of his full-dress robes is
kept, including hat and boots, hand-drum, bell, *dorje*, and
a miraculous *purbu*, or dagger for stabbing the demons.
These objects are only shown on special occasions to wealthy 778
worshippers, and they are highly celebrated as a certain cure 842
for barrenness. Couples thus afflicted, and who can afford

778 the necessary expense, have a preliminary service carried 842 out in the chapel, lasting for one or two days, after which the box containing the holy relics is brought forth and ceremoniously opened. Each article is placed on the heads of the suppliants, the officiating Lama meanwhile repeating various charms and spells. Of the marvellous efficacy of this procedure many stories are told: and should two sons result, one of them is invariably dedicated to the Church.

175 Subsequent to Lha-tsun's death in the latter end of the 794 seventeenth century, Lamaism has steadily progressed in Sikkim till latterly monks and monasteries filled the country. [212] What civilisation and literature the Sikkimese now possess they owe entirely to Lamaism, and the Lepcha alphabet too was derived from the Tibetan.

175 The official version of the story, as given in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, is somewhat different, and brings the history up to date. It runs as follows:

"Local tradition asserts that the ancestors of the Rajas of Sikkim originally came from the neighbourhood of Lhasa in Tibet. About the middle of the seventeenth century, the head of the family was named Puntsok Numgye; and to him repaired three Tibetan monks, professors of Nyingmapa (or 'red-cap' sect of Buddhism), who were disgusted at the predominance of the Gelukpa sect in Tibet. These Lamas succeeded in converting the Lepchas of Sikkim to their own faith, and in making Pun-tsok Raja of the country. The *avatars* of two of these Lamas are now the heads, respectively, of the great monasteries of Pemiongchi and Tashiding. In 1788 the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim in the governorship of the Morang or *tarai*, and only retired in 1789 on the Tibetan government ceding to them a piece of territory at the head of the Koti Pass. But in 1792, on a second invasion of Tibetan territory by the Gurkhas, an immense Chinese army advanced to the support of the Tibetans, defeated the Gurkhas, and dictated terms to them almost at the gates of Kathmandu."

It may be noted in passing that this account was probably compiled from Tibetan and Chinese sources, the only ones available at the time it was written; and for this reason it places the Gurkhas in a somewhat unfavourable light. There is no doubt, however, that the Gurkhas were in the wrong: they had overrun Sikkim and even looted Shigatse, which, by reason of its being the home of the Tashi Lama, is one of the most venerated places in all Tibet. There is little doubt that the Chinese army actually entered Nepalese territory; but that they dictated terms within sight of the capital is not so sure. According to the Nepalese version of the story the Chinese were greatly impressed with the valour of the Gurkhas, and their General retired amicably after arranging for the despatch of a quinquennial trade mission to Pekin. The arrangement was faithfully kept and a mission went from Nepal to China once every five years. With the fall of the central government, however, the arrangement lapsed and has since been discontinued; but the relations between the two countries have remained friendly.

"On the breaking out of the Nepal War in 1814, Major Latter at the head of a British force occupied the Morang, and formed an alliance with the Raja of Sikkim, who gladly seized the opportunity of revenging himself on the Gurkhas. At the close of the war in 1816, the Raja was rewarded by a considerable accession of territory, which has been ceded to the British by Nepal. In February, 1835, the Raja granted the site of Darjeeling to the British, and received a pension of Rs. 3,000 per annum in lieu of it."

This last seems to have been an astute piece of business on somebody's part; a pension of little more than two hundred pounds a year in return for a grant of land which is now the richest tea-producing area in the whole of India.

"There was, however, a standing cause of quarrel between the Raja and the paramount power, due to the prevalence of slavery in Sikkim; the Raja's subjects were inveterate kidnappers, and the Raja himself was most anxious to obtain from the British authorities the restoration of runaway slaves. With some notion of enforcing the latter demand, 175 Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, and Dr. Hooker, the famous naturalist, were seized in 1849 whilst travelling in Sikkim, and detained for six weeks. As a punishment for this outrage the Raja's pension was stopped, and a piece of territory, including the lower course of the Tista and the Sikkim tarai, was annexed. The practice of kidnapping Bengali subjects of the British Crown was, however, not discontinued; and two especially gross cases in 1860 led to an order that the Sikkim territory, north of the Ramman river and west of the Rangit, should be occupied until restitution was made. Colonel Gawler, at the head of a British force, with the Hon. Ashley Eden as envoy, advanced into Sikkim and proceeded to Tumlong, when the Raja was forced to make full restitution, and to sign a treaty (in March, 1861) which secured the rights of free trade, of protection for travellers, and of road-making. For many years the State was left to manage its own affairs; but for some time prior to 1888 the Tibetans were found to be intriguing with the Maharaja, who became more and more unfriendly. Affairs reached a climax in 1888, when war broke out with the Tibetans, who took up a position eleven miles within Sikkim territory. British troops were sent against them, and they were driven off with ease. In 1889 a political officer subordinate to the Commissioner of the Rajshai Division was stationed at Gangtok (now the capital of Sikkim) to advise and assist the Maharaja and his council; and this was followed in 1890 by the execution of a convention with the Chinese, by which the British protectorate over Sikkim and its exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of the State were recognised. Since the Tibetan expedition (the so-called Younghusband 'Mission') of 1904, the Political officer has been directly responsible to the Government of India.

"After the appointment of the Political officer in 1889 communications were greatly improved by the construction of roads and bridges, and the settlement of Nepalese was permitted in certain parts of the State. These measures were followed by the rapid development of the country. Settlers 175 from Nepal flocked in, and the population, which in 1891 was returned at 30,458, had grown to 59,014 ten years later; an increase of 93.7 per cent."

The story of the Nepalese invasion is still known by most of 173 the older people. This is the version told me by the Mandal of Lingtem, who was given it by his father:

In olden days the Maharaja of Sikkim lived in Fyung Di. One day his chief minister, who was also a famous Lama, said to him: "Your Highness; war is undoubtedly coming before long, so let us get away with our possessions while there is still time." To this, however, the King replied: "What do you, a mere Tibetan, know of war or other affairs of state? Even if war does come, cannot I and my seven sons defeat with ease any paltry Gurkha army that may come to attack us?" But the minister, whose name was Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo,* was not convinced, and taking leave of the King he gathered together his considerable possessions and set off towards the Chumbi Valley. Shortly after his departure news arrived that the Gurkha army was approaching the capital; and even before it reached Fyung Di it had already inflicted several defeats on the peace-loving Lepchas. The Queen and her sons implored the King to flee; but he was adamant and remained alone on guard. He stood with his shield in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, and threatened to cut down anyone who dared to approach him. But his six grown-up sons were more prudent, and decided to set off on their own. The Queen remained behind with her husband, and it was only when the invading army had already reached the outskirts of the town that the King at last acceded to his wife's entreaties. They hurried off just as they were; the palace was left open and nothing was even locked up. After the two of them had gone a mile or so from the palace, the Queen suddenly remembered that she had left her youngest son, a baby in arms, behind. She went back alone, snatched up the child, and was preparing to leave when she suddenly heard a crash behind her. She turned round to see what had happened and at once noticed that the mask of Lord Konchen had fallen to the ground. She picked it up, put it in her bosom with the baby and hurried away, rejoining the King shortly after. It is for this reason that Konchen is now worshipped by the Maharaja of Sikkim as a very special deity.

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* Lha-Tsun Ch'em-Bo must have been dead for nearly two hundred years when the Nepal war took place; but, as I have already noted, Sikkim history is a mixture of fact and fiction, and the Lepcha likes to associate the patron saint of his country with every important happening. He will be found to figure in nearly every story of this sort; if not in person, then in a reincarnated form.

After a long and weary march the King and Queen came to Kabi, a small village in the vicinity of the Penlong La. In the meanwhile the Gurkhas had taken possession of Fyung Di and had plundered the palace, stealing even the gold and silver sacred images, of which there were many. There were also copies of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. These were unlike ordinary books in that they were printed entirely in letters of the purest gold. The Gurkhas took all these books outside, piled them on a large flat stone, and set fire to them. When the embers had died down the gold was collected and from each volume a lump the size of a hen's egg was obtained. All this loot the Gurkhas sent off to Mikrum Di, which was the principal palace in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. All the Lepchas were very frightened of the conquering Gurkhas, especially when they saw the palace stripped of all its treasures. They saw that there was nothing they could do to stem the tide, and so they moved off into the hills, into the most remote corners and valleys they could find. They took with them their cattle and as much of the property as they could carry, hoping that the Gurkhas would never discover their hiding places. Most of them went to the headwaters of the Rangnyit river.

Now the King did not know what to do, as although the Gurkhas seemed to have retired for the moment, so also had his own people, and a great part of the country in consequence became entirely empty. Eventually he decided to take his wife and children with him and to ask the King of Tibet for refuge; 173 for although his Queen was a Lepcha, the King himself was a pure Tibetan. Later on the Gurkhas returned and swarmed once more all over Sikkim. Because of this the Lepchas were driven into still more remote places. Some of these were so inaccessible that the people had to live entirely on the produce of the jungle, eating even ferns. The Gurkhas had brought with them a huge mill made of lead, from which they cut off bits to make ammunition for their weapons. They carried this mill as far as Rungjyol (a place in the Talung Valley, on the other side of the river from Lingtem), but it was too much of a burden for them to carry it further. Its remains were still in existence until a few generations ago, but it has now all been used up by the local people. The Gurkhas advanced as far as Sakyong Pantung, where they buried their swords and shields to mark what was now the boundary of their country.

The Lepchas now began to leave their hiding places and they all collected together in order to decide on a plan of campaign. It was arranged to send a deputation to the Maharaja, who was still in Tibet, and to ask him what they should do. The King, however, was unable to give them an answer and told them to do whatever they thought best. After this the Lepchas gathered above Sakyong Pantung; and by degrees drove the Gurkhas back by stoning them. They could make no reply, since they had buried all their arms. The Gurkhas were gradually pushed lower and lower down the valley until eventually they reached the junction of the two rivers. Here the confusion was so great that the river became choked with bodies and a lake formed above the dam of corpses: but still a few desperate Gurkhas managed to hold on to the position. That night all the Lepchas went up on to the surrounding hills, where they set light to the bamboo forest, which burnt with a popping noise. This terrified the Gurkhas, who thought the noise was that of fire-arms being discharged. At the same time the Lepchas prepared stakes of pointed cane, lighted them and discharged them from their

173 bows. The Gurkhas were by now thoroughly terrified and their remnants retired in disorder. The Maharaja was thereupon summoned from Tibet and as soon as he arrived the country was finally cleared of the marauding Gurkhas, and the boundary fixed. It ran along the line Niu-oong-Munshi-oong-Du-Du Kosi (presumably the Dudh Kosi) and Tambar Kosi. For a long time the Maharaja used to collect taxes in this area, but no longer does so, as it is now part of Nepal. After settling the boundary, the Maharaja returned to Fyung Di, but he found only the walls of his place still standing. He summoned many Lamas and asked them to call the Lord Konchen, to whom a bullock was first sacrificed. At the same time all the other gods were also summoned. Konchen was told that since his was the greatest influence in Sikkim he must help in getting revenge upon the Gurkhas, who had wrought such terrible destruction all over the country. He agreed to help and said he would send devils to destroy Nepal. One year later the Mikrum Di, in which all the stolen treasure was stored, was engulfed in a rising lake. All the occupants of the palace, including the then King of Nepal, were drowned, but it is said that the palace is still visible beneath the water. Ever since that day half the wealth of Sikkim has remained buried in the lake and the other half is stored in Tulung Monastery, where it was put by Lha-Tsun-Ch'em-Bo. It cannot be touched because Lha-Tsun left it in the charge of certain devils who would immediately take their revenge if anyone tried to touch it. It is for this reason that the Maharaja can make no use of it. No one has ever seen the treasure, but the boxes in which it is stored are still visible in Talung. It is said that the people of Nepal are still very afraid of the Lepchas, but actually, so said the Mandal: "the only thing Lepchas are any good at nowadays is carrying other people's loads!"

175 The settlement of Gurkhas in Sikkim is no new thing, and I imagine there must have been a number already there even before the war with Nepal. Their coming has not been altogether a bad thing, for neither the Lepcha, still less the

Tibetan, is at heart an agriculturist. Left to himself the 175
Lepcha is but a poor cultivator, and he had need of the Gurkhas to show him how to make the best use of his land. The Gurkha needed land, the Lepcha instruction; but probably no one realised how this give and take would end. However it was, a line has now been fixed beyond which Gurkhas may not acquire land; and none but Lepchas may settle in Jongu. But to continue the Mandal's story:

Many, many years ago, in the time of Raja Pun-tsok, there 173
was a man named Laso Kaji, who thought he would like to possess the district of Jongu, which is one of the most fertile parts of Sikkim. He went to the Raja and told him of his desire, saying that the land he wanted was only a tiny piece, stony and unfertile. Since the Raja had not himself travelled, and indeed did not even know the names of his villages, he readily consented, at which Laso departed happy. Now the Raja had a favourite minister whose name was Yuk Ting Takshay, and this man he trusted greatly. He badly wanted some special poison plants, called *Sumdo* and *Vim-pot*, which were to be found only high up in the mountains, and which had the peculiar quality at night of shining like bright flames. They were extremely rare, and their possession brought with it the acquisition of every kind of riches. Yuk Ting Takshay set off on his quest, taking with him vast quantities of gold and silver, many copper vessels, a huge leaden mill, ivory, and a large assortment of such musical instruments as are used in monasteries. There was also much rich clothing, of the sort worn only by rajas and other great men. All these things he brought from Fyung Di, where the capital was in those days.

In the course of his travels Yuk Ting Takshay came to a place called Navar Hlo, which he reached just as night was falling. This place was the home of many devils, who refused to let him continue. But when they saw all the beautiful treasure he had brought they agreed to let him pass provided he left it behind. This he did; and in return the devils turned night into day, so that the minister need not

173 delay. All this treasure, which was meant as an offering to the gods, is said to be still concealed in a cave above the Talung: and as for the lead, it is still there, but has much decreased since the local people, in the course of generations, have been gradually whittling it away. The next day Yuk Ting Takshay got to a place called Toong Voong, and, arrived there, he asked to whom it belonged. "It is the property of Laso Kaji," they told him: and as he proceeded on his way he received always the same answer. At this time Laso Kaji himself was living in a house on the site of Jiroong's present home, and when Yuk Ting Takshay came to it he turned him out, whereupon he fled over the hills to Parfok, where he lived the whole of the following year, unbeknown to the authorities. Meanwhile Yuk Ting Takshay went on with his search and in due course returned to Fyung Di, when he told the Raja what he had seen. He told him how he had been deceived by Laso Kaji, to whom, unknowingly, he had ceded an immense track of land. When he had considered the story the Raja decided to send Yuk Ting Takshay back again in order to take possession of the land. Now below Mangen, near the present bridge, there is a hot spring called Rong Rong Tcha Chu, and it was here that Yuk Ting Takshay decided to camp. He had with him many servants, and these soon got into the way of going across the river to steal manioc and other plants. When the people on the far side of the river heard of this they went and complained to Laso Kaji, who was still living in Parfok, and whom they regarded as their ruler. He asked who these thieves were, but they could not tell him. He told them, however, to send twelve men across in the dead of night in order to kill as many of the thieves as they could. Before they could put their plan into action Yuk Ting Takshay's men got wind of their approach and started to run away, so that when they reached the camp they found only Yuk Ting Takshay. He was sitting alone in the hot spring, enjoying its warmth, and at the same time shouting to his men to come back and help him. Yuk Ting Takshay asked the men who

they were, and they told him they had been sent by Laso 173 Kaji with orders to kill both him and his men. Yuk Ting Takshay was very angry, and single-handed though he was, he managed to disarm all of Laso's men. Later on, when the row had somewhat subsided, Yuk Ting Takshay's followers returned, and the next morning he sent them across the river to find out what Laso Kaji meant. Laso was somewhat perplexed, as he had no idea of whom he had attacked. He decided to slaughter a bullock and sent it across as something in the nature of a peace offering. At the same time he sent word apologising for what he had done, and particularly asked Yuk Ting Takshay not to let the Raja know what had happened, for he feared for his life. Yuk Ting Takshay accepted the carcass and agreed to do what was asked of him, but at the same time he ordered Laso Kaji to leave the district, which he did. He went off no one knows where, but his descendants are now living in Namchi. From that day Jongu was taken over by the Raja and has formed part of the private estate ever since.

Laso Kaji's descendants seem to have kept up the family 175 tradition of lawlessness, for in 1861 we find the then holder of the title opposing a British force.

Writing on the 20th February from Rungpodon, on the banks of the Teesta, Colonel Gawler describes his meeting with him:

"I considered it expedient that our point for crossing the Teesta should be within, at most, three days' march of Tumloong (to obviate our being obliged to form any large depots on the other side of the river); but, as this would necessitate a march for some distance up the right bank from Temi, I determined on cutting all bridges below the point I might select, so that neither my force nor convoys might be liable to annoyance during what would be a flank march.

"I therefore started the next morning, an hour before daylight, to search for bridges, and about nine o'clock found a large one at the Linsing Ghat, a few miles above the Took Ghat. On approaching it I was met by three natives bearing

175a flag of truce and two letters, which were immediately forwarded to Mr. Eden, the Special Commissioner.

"The natives informed me that Lassoo Kajee was on the other side (of the Teesta) and wished to come across.

"As I knew that Mr. Eden wished every facility to be afforded to natives to come in and return to their villages, and had heard Lassoo Kajee's name mentioned particularly, I said that he might come, and concealed my men in the jungles along the bank, near the bridge. There were several hours' delay while he was getting (as they informed us) his baggage ready, and during this time we observed that the stockades opposite were full of men, armed with matchlocks and rifles: I also observed one or two jingalls.[1] Across the river was about a stone's throw, and the opposite jungle was thick with faces peeping at us. There was a strongly marked difference between these curious ones and those who manned the stockades. The tall figures, features, attitudes, and demeanours of the latter were totally unlike the effeminate Lepcha, or even the Bhooteas whom I had hitherto seen. I was informed that they were Tibetans, the guard of the Sikkim Raja, who had sent a detachment of them to every bridge.

"As Mr. Eden had told me that he did not wish me to stop operations for anything, I informed Lassoo Kajee when he arrived that I had come to cut the bridge. He replied that he had given orders that no one should cross while he was negotiating, but I told him that I could not spare a picket to see that his orders were not disobeyed, nor did I want to have to make a second trip, and that if he wished to recross at the point he could do so on a raft. (Rafts do not take long in making, but require five men, at least, on each side, to work them, and will only take from fifteen to twenty men at a time. A party crossing to annoy us would not be satisfied with a raft as a means of retreat. By a hot pursuit they might all be caught, for the men would not stop to work the raft.)

"Lassoo Kajee at length said that his own men should destroy the stockades and the bridge, and after some more time spent in parleying, and the guards removing

[1] [A large musket or crude cannon, fired from a swivel--Analyst]

their baggage and marching out, this was effected.* 175

"We then left, and Lassoo Kajee accompanied us and asked us to send an escort with him to Mr. Eden at Temi, for he was on his way there on the previous evening, and hearing firing ran down again, and falling on the rocks hurt his leg severely. Ascending the ridge towards our camp we saw Mr. Eden and Cheboo Lama coming down the ridge behind us from Temi, he having understood that I was encamped on the river bank. I returned to him with Lassoo Kajee, and we then went to the river bank and talked with some of the people on the opposite side, and it was arranged that those who wished might cross on rafts. Mr. Eden then returned to Temi and I to my camp."

To the above account it is only necessary to add that 648 friendly relations have continued with Sikkim ever since, and that the country, although completely independent, is now the chief refuge of tired Calcutta residents in search of health. Mountaineers, mostly from Europe, are also visiting the country in ever-increasing numbers; and hardly a year now passes without some hitherto virgin peak being climbed. Kinchinjunga, however, has so far resisted every assault, and it seems likely that many years will pass before man is able to overcome its most formidable defences.

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* "On leaving Namchi, the force was divided into three parties, the main column, under Captain Impey, proceeding direct towards the Teesta, and two parties, under Colonel Gawler and Captain Urwin respectively, making long detours to the left and right, with the view of all reuniting again at the Teesta. Captain Impey's column surprised the Sikkimese camp at Temi; they fled, leaving their clothes and weapons, and were pursued down within a few miles of the Teesta. From that time no further attempt at opposition was made; the people were perfectly paralysed at the rapid movements of the troops, whom they perceived to be advancing in several directions at once, by forced marches, through dense forests, and over pathless mountains, traversing in one day distances which even the natives of these hills considered to be three fair marches."—*Extract from Mr. Eden's final report, No. 40, April 8th, 1861.*

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PART TWO

THE PEOPLE

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CHAPTER 4

ORIGIN OF THE LEPCHAS AND VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

773 ITPUMU, the man, and Kumsiting, the woman, were born from the two peaks of Kinchinjunga. They had two children, a boy named Tashay Ting, and a girl to whom they gave the name of Nazong Nyu. These two married and had many children: but because they were brother and sister all the children were devils, and for this reason their mother refused to suckle them. Eventually they gave birth to a child which was not a demon. They gave it the name of Ril Bu Shing, and because it was their first real child the mother treated it tenderly and suckled it with loving care. When the demon children saw this they were very angry and decided to do away with Ril Bu Shing. This they did, and he was buried near a certain small peak on the right bank of the Talung river. The parents were very upset, and deciding that life was insupportable, they divided their property and separated, Tashay Ting going towards Tibet and his wife towards Sikkim. Prior to this the grandmother, Kumsiting, called all her demon grandchildren together and addressed them. All came with the exception of Dom Mung, the demon of leprosy, who did not hear the summons. She told them all that in future there would be no objection to their "eating the souls" of human beings; but, on the other hand, when offerings were made to them on behalf of these same humans by *Bongting*, *Mun* or *Rumfat Bu*, they must accept them, and that when they did this they must leave the humans alone. This is said to be the origin of making [753] sacrifices to the various demons. But since Dom Mung was not present at the meeting and did not receive these instructions there is no cure for persons stricken with leprosy. After this Kumsiting created man. The first man was called

773 Tarbong Pu; the first woman Nari Pu. They lived on the twin peaks beyond Seniolchum; and from them all the races of man, including the Lepchas, are descended.

* * * * *

614 The Lepcha tribe is composed of a number of clans, called
619 *pu-tso*. No one can say how many clans there are, for this grouping seems to be a purely local one. In the Kalimpong district I recorded the names of over forty different clans, but in Lingtem there were but fourteen, all of them different from those I had already collected. There does not appear ever to have been any sort of tribal organisation, nor even a tribal leader; and while I use the word clan to denote these collections of people, it would be better to regard them as merely belonging to one large family, which is in fact what
614 they are. We shall probably never know what functions the clan formerly possessed, but its sole use nowadays is in regulating marriage, it being impossible for a man to marry a girl of the same *pu-tso* as his own. Ethnologists call this custom exogamy: but Lepcha exogamy is of a special kind, for it does permit a man to marry a relative of his father provided the relationship is removed by five (but some say seven) generations. Such a marriage is of course only possible with a person descended through the father's sister, since she, having married into another clan, belongs to a different *pu-tso*. In the case of a marriage between the descendants of two sisters a separation of only three generations is demanded. In actual practice all this means is that any two related people, provided they do not both belong to the same clan, may marry provided the relationship between them is sufficiently distant as to have been forgotten for all practical purposes.

Most people know the story of how their own clan originated, and these myths have probably been reinterpreted many times. There is a great similarity between them, but the following is a typical example.

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which

Up towards the mountains there is a big cliff on which 614
many monkeys used to live. Below it was a limpid pool, in 773
which a young girl was in the habit of bathing. One day, when she was leaving the water, a monkey came down to her and the two lay together. In due course a child was born and this was the first member of the Sungvel clan. Now the land in these parts belonged to some Tibetans, seven of whom came one day to gather honey. When they saw how steep the place was they realised that they could never climb it, so they asked Sungvel, who by then had a son of his own, to climb it for them. Sungvel told the seven Tibetans to sit in a row by the pool, since if they came nearer they would be stung by the bees. He and his son then climbed the cliff. They tied their ankles together so as to get a better hold on the smooth rock-face, and by mounting on one another's shoulders managed to reach the place where the honey was. The son tore it out with his hands and threw it down. As soon as the bees saw what was happening they swarmed out and started to attack the seven men who were sitting below. They were stung so badly that the pain was unendurable: the only thing to do was to jump into the water, and so they were all drowned. After this Sungvel and his son took possession of the land, but the clan is now extinct.

I have already said that the Lepchas have neither tribal 636
nor clan organisation; but in order to regulate their dealings with the state certain officials have been appointed. Firstly, there is the *Mukhtiyar*, who deals direct with the Maharaja's agent in Gangtok. This is a comparatively new office, the present holder being only the third in succession.

There is but one Mukhtiyar for the whole of Jongu, and his 636
duty is to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the separate 622
village *Mandals* or headmen. The Mandals collect taxes in [651]
their respective villages and go once every year with the actual cash to Gangtok: but since most of them are completely illiterate they deliver their accounts verbally to the
Mukhtiyar, who records them in writing. The Mukhtiyar 636
receives no pay but is entitled to a commission of four annas a year for each house on which taxes are paid. He tours all

636 over his district twice each year, when he assesses the tax to
be paid on areas newly brought under cultivation. He also
registers births and deaths. At the end of each tour he
reports to Gangtok and renders his accounts in person. It
may be noted in passing that local officials, whatever their
rank, have at all times direct access to the Maharaja, with
whom they may discuss their problems in person. The
system is almost exactly the same as English feudalism at its
best, and is free from the rigidity that makes British Indian
administration so inelastic and impersonal.

The office of Mukhtiyar is not necessarily hereditary, since
it can only be successfully filled by one who can at least read
and write. The first Mukhtiyar of Jongu was a Lama of
Lingtem, and when he died the office was offered to his son
Tafoor. This man, who is also a Lama, is one of the most
intelligent men in the village, and was one of our best
informants. He felt, however, that he was unfitted for the
post, since his education had been confined almost entirely to
[789] classical Tibetan. Also he was the only man in the village
who had learnt how to keep away rain; and because of this
the whole village begged him to refuse the office. The
present Mukhtiyar does not live in Lingtem, and we only
met him once, when he came to pay his respects.

622 The post of village Mandal is hereditary. If he has no son,
as is at present the case in Lingtem, the office will eventually
devolve upon the man who marries his daughter; but when a
man has no children some near paternal relative will usually
be appointed. In addition to their work as tax-collectors
622 692 Mandals have authority to inflict fines up to thirty rupees,
but a Mukhtiyar may order a fine of sixty. Any case requir-
[685] ing a bigger fine than this has to be reported to the Durbar in
Gangtok, which also settles cases in connection with mis-
appropriation of land; but there have been no such cases in
622 Lingtem since many years. Mandals receive no pay from
the state, but each household is required to give him three
days' free labour (or three men for one day) a year. This
is to compensate him for the neglect of his fields which
would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business.

would otherwise ensue during his absence on state business. 000

Every Mandal has under him several assistants known as 624 *Karbari*. The number of these is not fixed and is at the discretion of individual headmen. Karbaris are appointed for a period of three years, and with the exception of Lamas everyone takes on the duty in turn. The roster goes on indefinitely, so that if any particular man is not called upon during his own lifetime the turn devolves upon his son. There is no pay nor any other material advantage in the office of Karbari, but it is not unpopular, since it gives the holder a certain amount of authority.

When a man has retired from the office of Karbari he is 693 eligible for the appointment of *Youmi*. At present time there are four Youmis in Lingtem. Whenever any matter crops up which can only be decided by reference to customary law the Mandal calls in the Youmis to aid him in giving a decision. They are usually very old men, and because of this they can decide such matters as whether there is any reason why a particular couple should not be married: or if one man runs off with the wife of another what compensation he should be required to pay, and so on. The word *Youmi* does not appear in the dictionary and I do not know what it means. I believe, however, that the office may be a survival of tribal administration. It is not known in other parts of Sikkim.

There is no *per capita* tax in Sikkim but every house pays 651 five rupees a year. In addition to this there is a tax of one 655 rupee for each sixteen pounds of dry rice sown, and the same for maize. Rice grown wet, in terraced fields (a recent [77] innovation), is taxed at eight annas for eight pounds of seed, but barley, buckwheat, and wheat are free. The economics of Lingtem, and indeed of most parts of Sikkim, are now based upon the cardamom, the sale of which is a state monopoly. The market price of cardamoms fluctuates from year to year, and for this reason the tax is adjusted to a sliding scale. When the rate is ten rupees a maund (approximately eighty pounds) the cultivator pays a tax of fourteen annas a maund; one and a half rupees when the

651 market rate is twenty, and two and a half when it rises to
655 forty rupees. The right to buy cardamoms throughout the state has been sold to certain specified contractors, who are responsible for collecting the above tax and handing it over as a lump sum to the Durbar office. The weighing of the crops is done in the presence of representatives of the state; but even so the system results in considerable hardship to the peasant. As is usually the case the man who does the work sees little of the profit. This question, however, will be discussed when we come to consider the question of debt.

651 When cattle are grazed in the forest their owners pay a tax
231 of two annas a month for each animal. Most of the oxen not required for ploughing remain up in the forest from February until about the middle of June. They are left entirely unattended and never stray. I have travelled a great deal in various parts of the Himalaya but in no other place have I seen cattle roaming about completely unattended. It was a most extraordinary sight to see them going out to graze in the mornings completely alone, returning again in the evening, and always in the same order. It is a common sight all over India to see small children out with the cattle or driving a flock of goats along the road. It is in many ways a good thing
[857] and gives the child a sense of responsibility. But in Jongu one never sees it, and the children hang about in the fields all day or play around the house. The only time that cattle are watched is when it is known that a predatory animal is about. At such times a small boy will usually stay by them.

CHAPTER 5

LAMAISM: MONKS AND NUNS

TO the ignorant Lepcha the world is peopled by 776
spirits; evil spirits known as *Mung*, and good spirits known as *Rum*, or gods. It is difficult sometimes to decide whether a particular spirit is devil or god; for while a Mung is always evil, a Rum, if angered, will appear in a malicious guise and may then be referred to as a demon. Every happening in the material world is due to the influence of spirits. Devils cause sickness, bad harvests, and every other kind of misfortune: but provided they are appeased by means of the correct sacrifices their evil can be averted, and on occasions they may even be induced to further some particular project, such as causing the death of an enemy, or winning the heart of some apparently stony-hearted woman. Some earlier writers have described the Lepchas as animists, but I believe this idea to be mistaken. Animism implies the attribution of a living soul to inanimate 774
objects and natural phenomena; but the Lepcha has not this belief. According to his ideas, trees, rivers, rocks and other natural objects are only the homes of spirits; but as such they must be treated with proper respect. The objects themselves, however, while they are sometimes thought to possess a separate soul, do not need to be propitiated. When a house, 774
for instance, is being built, a sacrifice will be made when the 782
trees are felled from which it is to be constructed. This sacrifice, however, is offered not to the spirits considered to be inherent in the trees themselves, but to compensate for any annoyance which might be caused to spirits living in them, and also as a general expiation for the sin of taking life; for trees, being living things, are thought to have separate souls of their own. This last is only a minor

774 consideration and its neglect would not cause any immediate
782 retribution; but a failure to propitiate the actual spirits might be fraught with all sorts of evil consequences and no one would willingly omit to carry it out.

[771] It is not possible for an ordinary man to have direct
756 dealings with the spirit world, nor indeed would he normally know the cause of his particular trouble. The cause of certain common ills, such for instance as coughs and colds, boils or fever, are, of course, well known to most people, but not the special knowledge required to make the necessary sacrifices to the particular demon which has caused them. For this it is necessary to have recourse to a proper practitioner, either a *Mun* or a *Yukman*, which is the word used by Lepchas to denote a Lama. It seems certain that prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim such sacerdotal functions as were required by the Lepchas were carried out by Muns. Their services are still much in demand in Lingtem, where they work in close conjunction with the Lamas. In other parts of Sikkim, however, their numbers are steadily decreasing, and the tendency is for all priestly functions to be carried out only by Lamas. In the Kalimpong district (in British India) there are still large colonies of Lepchas, and amongst these people Muns have almost ceased to exist. Such as there are practise almost secretly, for their presence is not welcome to orthodox Lamas.

793 "A notable feature of Lamaism throughout all its sects," notes Waddell, "and decidedly un-Buddhistic, is that the Lama is a priest rather than a monk. He assigns himself an
[536] indispensable place in the religion and has coined the current saying, 'Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God.' He performs sacerdotal functions on every possible occasion, and a large proportion of the order is almost entirely engaged in this work. And such services are in much demand, for the people are in hopeless bondage to the demons, and not altogether unwilling slaves to their exacting worship."

795 The Lamas of Sikkim belong to the *Nin-Ma-pa* or

unreformed sects. These are the so-called "red hat" Lamas, 795
as opposed to the reformed "yellow-hat" or *Ge-lug-pa*, which form the established Church of Tibet proper. The Nin-ma-pa is more freely tinged than any other with pre-Buddhist practices and its Lamas are required neither to remain celibate nor to practise abstinence. "It regards the metaphysical Buddha Samantabhadra as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha. Its mystic insight is Mohautpanna or the "great ultimate perfection." Its tutelaries are "The fearful Vajra and Dub-pa-koh-gye." Its guardian demon is "The Lord *Gur*. It worships the Guru Padma-sambhava, the founder of Lamaism, in a variety of forms, both divine and demoniacal, expressive of his different moods at different times, and also his favourite Kashmiri teacher, Sri Sinha, and the Indian teacher of the latter, Gah-rab-Dorje, who derived his inspiration from the celestial Buddha, Vajra-satwa, who in turn was inspired by the primordial deity, Samantabhadra-Buddha."

There are, of course, in Sikkim many learned Lamas who 793
would find no difficulty in expounding the canon of their 795
Church. The Abbot of Lachen, for instance, which is only a long day's march from Lingtem, is a man of quite remarkable intelligence and learning. Among others Mme. David-Neel, the famous French Tibetan scholar and traveller, has paid tribute to his exceptional ability as a teacher, as has my friend Marco Pallis, who also studied with him for a time. But men such as he are rareties in any community; and as for the Lamas in Lingtem I doubt if they could even name the sect to which they belong. But in Lingtem, and in fact all over the Jongu district, the Church is nothing more than a spare-time occupation. There are about eighteen Lamas attached to the Lingtem Monastery and all of these are engaged in the normal occupation of an ordinary Lepcha villager. They attend at the monastery for periodical ceremonies, usually twice each month, but their chief function consists in conducting private services in connection with illness, crops, house-building, and so on, for

793 individual members of the community. Unlike Tibet, where
795 animal sacrifice is practically unknown, many of these
[782] ceremonies, particularly those in connection with illness and
[756] other manifestations of devils, require the sacrifice of an ox or
goat, and on such occasions the Lama is assisted by a Mun;
793 for although the Lama has no objection to assisting at such a
very un-Buddha-like ceremony he draws the line at actually
taking life himself. He is a physician more than a priest, for
he deals with the ills of the physical body rather than with
those of the soul. Sometimes he is unable himself to diagnose
[787 the cause of trouble, and on such occasions he may call in a
756] *Nunjimu*, a person who by dancing herself into a trance is able
to ascertain the cause of the trouble, but not to cure it, this
being the Lama's own province. The Lama does not, I
think, claim for himself any supernatural power. He is
merely "one who knows," as the Lepcha word *Yukman*
implies, as opposed to the "ignorant one," or ordinary
793 layman. The whole of his teaching is based upon cause and
755 effect; and once a cause has been ascertained its treatment is
merely the carrying out of a definite specified ceremony.
This conception of course is quite in accordance with the best
medical tradition; but it is more open to doubt whether
Harley Street would approve of such treatment as, for
instance, the sacrifice of a bullock, coupled with a thousand
repetitions of the mystic formula "*Om mani padme hum*," as a
cure for general debility. If a man calls in one Lama rather
than another it is not because he has necessarily more faith
in his powers, or thinks he has a better bedside manner, but
because he knows more ceremonies: X may have studied
only as far as the cure of the common cold; but Y may know
how to ensure that your wife's next child is a boy. Either of
these treatments would doubtless find favour in Europe; but
in the meantime I cannot honestly recommend a pilgrimage
to Lingtem for the purpose!

793 A boy does not usually become a Lama because he feels it
787 is his right vocation but because his horoscope, prepared at
birth, decrees it. Every child is born with certain signs, from

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Lingtem Monastery.

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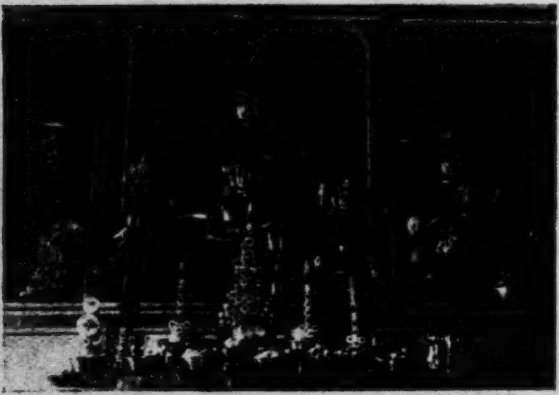
Images in the main room of the monastery. On the table in front is a complete offering, consisting of *tormas*, bowls of grain and water, lamps, etc., prepared for the monthly worship of Kinchinjunga. The large central figure represents Padma Sambhava, generally known as Guru Rimpoche.



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Lamas dedicating the offering to Kinchinjunga. The woman standing in front of the altar has come in to serve the Lamas with *chi*.

[Facing p. 72]

793 the characteristics of which no escape is possible. The "head
787 sign" denotes that a child should become a Lama and when this is found the boy is always sent to a teacher. He may later decide that he does not wish to practise and in this case will cease to study. There is no objection to children without the "head sign" becoming Lamas; but if, for instance, a boy born with the "hand sign" wishes to enter the Church nothing can prevent him from eventually turning into a thief. If a girl is born with the "heart sign" it means she should become a female Lama; and it may be noted in passing that in both sexes the "genital sign" is thought to be a sure indication of future sexual promiscuity. These so-called "signs" are not actually visible on the body; they are merely the attributes attaching to birth at a particular time, and failure to comply with the conditions indicated is thought to result in a shortening of life. I think, however, that Lepchas do not attach much importance to them, and in actual practice the son of a Lama, whatever his "sign," will nearly always study for at least a few years.

793 It is said that when a child reaches the age of three or four it will try on its own to study. I personally never saw any such infant prodigies; and such small boys in Lingtem as were destined for the Church seemed much more interested in catapulting birds or playing around in the fields. The
[292] only difference between them and other children was in the yellow sash worn round their waists, the distinguishing mark, apart from close-cropped hair, of Lepcha Lamas, who in Lingtem do not ordinarily wear monastic robes but dress as laymen. When the novice is about eight or nine his parents
[431] select some experienced Lama as his teacher, and to him they send the boy with a present. This usually takes the form of a pig's carcass and a few rupees. A father never teaches his own son, except incidentally, but the teacher will nearly always be some man of the boy's own village. The novice generally lives with his teacher and receives instruction only at night, since both must spend the daylight hours working in the fields. Sometimes a boy will run away from his

793 teacher and when this happens his father will beat him and send him back. A boy must study for three years before he can call himself a Yukman: but he is really no more than a probationer for several years to come. There is no examination at the end of the novitiate, but the pupil must be pronounced as fit by his master before proceeding further. Before a Yukman can be advanced in rank he must be passed as fit by the head of his monastery. This, however, is a mere matter of form and dependent entirely upon giving the necessary feasts. The position is almost exactly the same as that of the Oxford or Cambridge B.A., who has merely to pay a fee in order to become a Master of Arts: but in Lingtem the candidate is not required to pay in cash; he merely entertains the Senate to a feast of pork and drink.

As soon as a boy has finished his three years' course of study he is presented to the local monastery by two Lamas, for [431] whom he provides food and drink. In return they give him a ceremonial scarf and a present of one rupee. There is no actual ceremony, but this exchange of gifts constitutes the novice's graduation as a *Chap-dibu*, the lowest rank of Lama. He has no priestly functions and is little more than a servant to the other Lamas during such times as they are present at the monastery, seeing that their drinking cups are kept replenished, sweeping out the building and performing other such menial tasks. A *Chap-dibu* must remain about three years in this and each subsequent rank before he can be advanced, the next stage being known as *Tong-pön-bu*. To attain this rank the Lama must provide a feast of one pig, [273] eighty pounds of specially prepared dry millet for making *Chi*, the universal drink of Sikkim, and eighty pounds each of rice and parched rice. A *Tong-pön-bu* is not permitted to read from books during monastic ceremonies, but he may now [534] play on conch shells. He may also blow the funnel-shaped hautboy called *Galing*, also the long ten-foot trumpets, *Rukdung*, and the flutes, made from human thigh-bones known as *Kongling*. When playing on the conch shell he may, if he wishes, wear a special red cap called *Tongyo*. Should the young Lama not already know how to play these instruments he is particularly enjoined to practise assiduously; and I can personally testify that he does so!

The next stage is known as *Ka-Ne*, and to attain this a feast similar to the last must again be given. A Ka-Ne also plays on musical instruments and in addition he is permitted to offer lamps to the monastery idols, and to change the ceremonial bowls of water every morning and evening. He also assists in making the ceremonial cones of dough known as *Tormo;* but still he takes no part in the reading of books. To attain the next rank, known as *Che-ne*, a much bigger feast is necessary. This time an ox, sufficient millet to make forty maunds of Chi, and three maunds of rice are necessary. The initiation ceremony, which seems to consist mostly in eating and drinking, lasts for three days and nights. The Lama will himself usually attempt to cultivate the necessary millet from which the *Chi* is made, but in view of the enormous quantity necessary the whole village will generally lend a hand in providing it. Most of the village is present during the ceremony; and in addition to the food and drink provided by the Lama himself each household provides eight pounds of parched rice and a certain amount of *Chi.* During the festivities the newly appointed Che-Ne will prepare the ceremonial altar, together with its concomitant *Tormas.* He is now qualified to take part in all ceremonies, but as Che-Ne his special duties are to be responsible for the ritually correct performance of all monastic services. His function is somewhat similar to that of the Esquire Bedells at Cambridge. He may now perform ceremonies outside the monastery for private individuals, and if of sufficient age may even be entrusted with the teaching of young novices.

The next stage, known as *Chŏtembu*, requires another big feast, but the festivities for this last for one day only. In addition to the food and drink the newly promoted Lama is also required to provide ten pounds either of oil or butter for burning in the ceremonial lamps. There is only one Chŏtembu in each monastery, and he is in charge of all disciplinary

793 matters. He is permitted to beat other Lamas, and also laymen who are slack in the performance of their duties, not excluding even the Dorje-Lopön, or head of the monastery. It may be noted, however, that he has no authority to beat people once they have left the monastery or its grounds.

The next rank is known as *Umzet.* This, too, necessitates a big feast, which is generally attended by the whole village and lasts from two to three days. An Umzet teaches but has no authority to beat people. He is really under-study to the head of the monastery, and is usually not advanced to this rank unless it is considered that he is capable eventually of succeeding his master.

Dorje-Lopön is the highest rank of all, and there is usually one at the head of every monastery, though in Lingtem there are two. In addition to the usual feast each Lama and every householder in the village presents a woven scarf to the Dorje-Lopön. He is not required to keep all these scarves and generally sells them again at half their usual price. Thus, people who do not bring one with them to the ceremony may buy one from the Dorje-Lopön himself and re-present it, so that the offering really turns into a kind of cash transaction. There is no limit to the number of each rank of Lama in any particular monastery, and in practice the senior Dorje-Lopön, should there be more than one, is the titular head, the actual power being usually in the hands of some more active member of the community, more often than not the Umzet, as was the case in Lingtem. For the performance of actual
[212] ceremonies most of the Lamas wear the usual maroon robe as worn by Lamas in Tibet. Unlike that country, however, there are here no differences in dress by which a Lama's rank may be recognised.

In addition to the Lamas there are also in Lingtem a number of nuns, or *Inebu,* as they are called. In Tibet, while female Lamas are given a very inferior position, scarcely higher than lay devotees, they are required to practise chastity, and usually live an ascetic life in remote and lonely convents. There is one such place at Tatsang, on the road to

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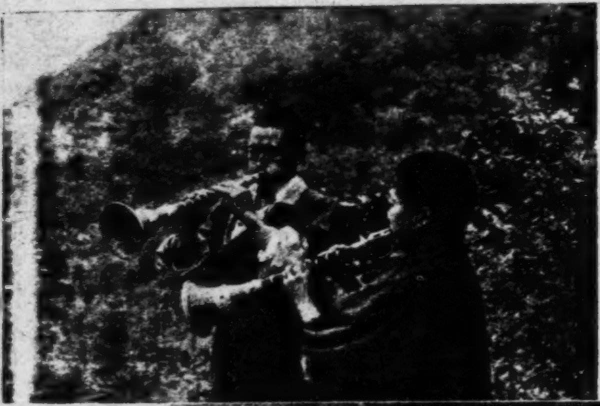
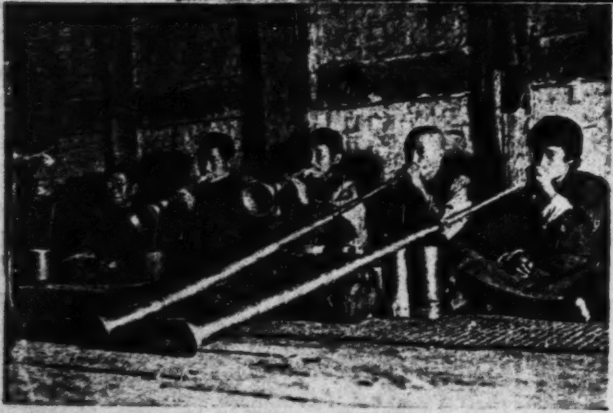


Lamaist music.

Lamaist music.



Lamaist music.

[Facing p. 76]

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Inebus performing their ceremony of circumambulating the monastery.

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Hlatam, the alleged poisoner.

Domestic altar in the private house of a Lama. Note the reserve store of maize hanging from the rafters on the left; and on the right a hurricane lantern, one of the treasures of the house.

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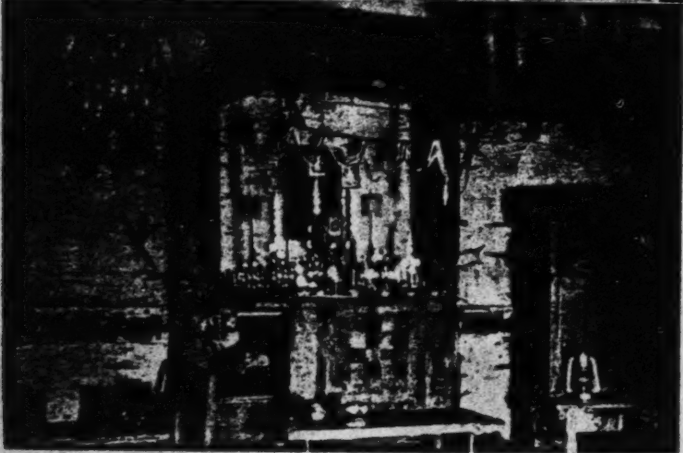

[facing p. 77]

793 Everest, which has been several times visited on the way to
[515] the mountain. The nuns were indescribably dirty, and their
faces caked with soot. They were dressed in maroon, in robes
[292] similar to those worn by Lamas. Their heads were com-
[302] pletely shaved; but to protect them against the cold, which was severe at nearly all times of the year, they wore huge yak's-hair wigs, shaped like the hats worn by Chinese mandarins, which gave them an almost grotesque appearance. The first time we visited the place, in 1922, the nuns turned out in force to inspect us, but they were far too shy to converse, even through our Tibetan interpreter, and contented themselves with a giggle. Most, if not all, of them were, so far as I remember, completely illiterate.

"Nuns are admitted to a few monasteries in Sikkim," notes Waddell, "but their number is extremely small, and individually they are illiterate." I doubt whether the Inebus of Lingtem could properly be classed as nuns at all. Most of them have had no real training and not one of them can read or write. They do not perform ceremonies for private individuals; nor are they given a place inside the main hall at monastic services, being regarded as scarcely different from ordinary women. Their devotions are confined almost entirely to the turning of prayer-wheels and drums, circumambulation of the monastery building, and telling their beads. The small Hla-gong, which houses the three big prayer-drums, is really their private chapel, and to this they have access at all times. They usually came to the monastery thrice each month, spent a few hours turning the drums, while they sang in unison, and then went away again. Whenever their visit coincided with some ceremony performed by the men we noticed that the attendance was markedly greater.

[788 Most Inebus wear a rosary round their necks or carry it
293] twined around the wrist. There is no other mark by which
793 they may be recognised. I told one old woman that in Tibet
834 I had noticed that nuns were always shaven, and asked her
why the same custom was not adopted here, since the Lamas

793 conformed to the Tibetan rule. But she only laughed, and
834 would not tell me the reason. When I got to know her well
she told me: "Once a woman's head is shaved," she said, "it is no longer permissible to sleep with a man."

302 Lepcha women usually wear their hair in a divided plait,
576 which they coil in a circle round the head. It is a mark of
793 respect to wear the hair down loose, and for this reason the plaits are uncoiled when Inebus come to the monastery. The same rule applies to men, who will likewise undo their queues as a mark of great respect. I seldom saw anyone do this at the monastery, but was told that a man would wear his hair loose in the presence of the Maharaja, for instance, if he wished to show the utmost respect.

793 The wife of a Lama does not necessarily become an Inebu. It is entirely a matter of personal desire: nor is it necessary to start as a child. Many women do not make the decision until well after marriage. It is said that a certain amount of instruction is given; but in view of their duties, which could well be performed by a blind deaf-mute, I do not think this can amount to much. They do, of course, commit a few prayers to memory, and it is said that their training takes from ten to fifteen years. Since they are still illiterate at the end of it, this I can well believe. Datoop's wife, who is easily the most intelligent of the local Inebus, told me that the selected teacher will usually be a Lama, but may, if desired, be some other woman. The pupil visits her teacher generally twice a day and works in the fields in between. If the teacher lives far away she will go only once a day, or even once a week, in which case the teacher will give her homework to prepare. It is not quite clear, nor was my informant able to explain, how this was done by a person who could neither read nor write. Sometimes a Lama will teach his own wife, and such Lingtem Inebus as are the wives of Lamas have all been instructed by their own husbands. Inebus have the same ranks as Lamas, but their duties do not vary, nor does there appear to be any arrangement or ceremony by which a woman may be advanced in rank.

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to 793
take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebus come to the monastery three times every month: on 793 796
the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), 212
according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in [805]
this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three [784
days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she 834]
permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

CHAPTER 6

SOME LEPCHA PERSONALITIES

159 IT is time now to introduce some Lingtem personalities; and it will be convenient to start with the Church. The details of these brief biographies were not in every case contributed by the individual concerned; for, as with us, some Lepchas prefer to tell of others rather than to talk about themselves. I always felt apologetic when asking for these personal details. How many of us, I wonder, would care to impart the more intimate details of our private lives to a stranger, and one of an alien culture at that? In actual fact, however, most Lepchas have no reticence about such matters, and are not in the least offended if one refers to their illegitimate children, or asks for the names of the women with whom they are on intimate terms.

* * * * *

The senior Dorje-Lopön of Lingtem was a man of almost saintly appearance. Ascetic-looking and upright, you would have said that here was one who had long since cast off the cares of the flesh, but actually he could have given points to Casanova. When we first met him he was well over eighty years of age, but still spent most of the day helping in the fields. He first married when he was quite a young man, but tiring of his wife, by whom he had one son, he transferred his affections to a girl he liked better. He found the new wife so much to his liking, that, leaving his son in the care of the first, he forsook her and ran off to Darjeeling with the second. He came back one year later, and on his return his first wife's relatives attempted to bring about a reconciliation. This, 159 however, was unsuccessful, since the Dorje-Lopön had 586 completely tired of his first wife. All efforts having failed, she

was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was 159
made to refund the original marriage price. He was, [586]
however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of
fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery.
As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and
sometimes with his mother, who had now married the head-
man of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje- 159
Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; 595
but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an
attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was
her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to
live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to
Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies
at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of
the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at
least regularise his position. To this he consented; and
accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a
pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day
espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a
mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and [848]
when this occurred her parents forced him to do the cere-
mony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give
birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some
time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the 159
Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In
those days, before the present building had been erected, the
main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There
was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a
separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living
in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a
woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had
already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but
her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She [584]
was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor
to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit.
Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant 159
that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days 785

159 some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional
785 days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-
Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After
159 a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that
837 they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the
Hla-gong. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed
unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most
reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the
pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank.
The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in
Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that
he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew
perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care
particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to
713 complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence
against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather
unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-
Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to
visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more
than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to
induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives;
but without success. All this happened about seventeen years
ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five
years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas,
headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and
decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former
wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say
that they could kill him before he would consent to leave
Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it
was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former
wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they
did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married
and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Aty[illegible],
wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up
residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his
father, was then living, having promised to see no more of
Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from
time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of
putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the
Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and
Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and
it was on this account that people became suspicious.
Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a
further three months and then departed to their own home.
An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [586]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required
to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in
cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not
liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced
that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that
henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to
say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the
opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to
the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again
started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do.
Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations
Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by
himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery,
was told of this order and specifically warned that he must
only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public
ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the
Hla-gong. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly
to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband
decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together
in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön
helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again.
There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

159 587 visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of
[837] finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

159 When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a
[831] sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

* * * * *

[837] The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder
159 brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok;
595 leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

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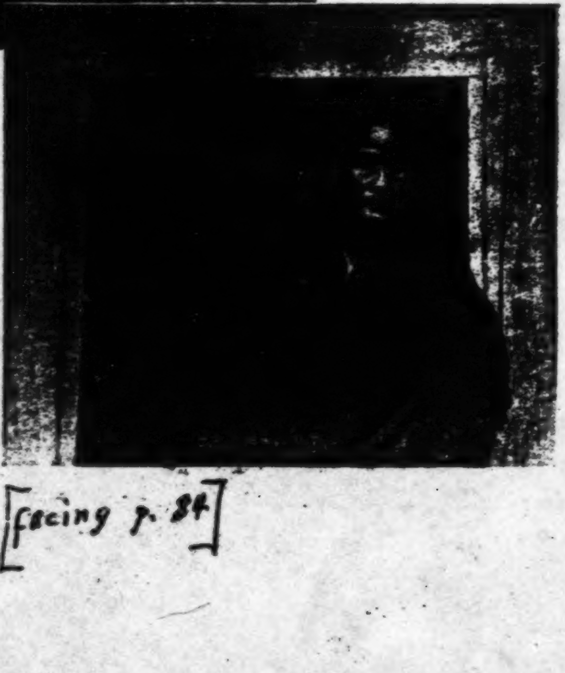
The second Dorje Lopön.



The senior Dorje Lopön.

[facing p. 84]

Tafoor.

Chötembu.

[facing p. 85]

159 595 particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopōn actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

159 581 I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life; but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often [789] attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

159 Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly [426] cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

159 already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head. [582] He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction. [593] While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in [587] Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill. [861] His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, 159
however, he[1] is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years [864]
ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with
whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years 159
younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already 866
nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook,
and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the
house. No arrangements have so far been made for her
marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner
during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only 159
reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his [582]
wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age.
He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play [557
at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was 776]
fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him
do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons
would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of
devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and
even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after
dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the
time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a [778]
charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru
Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and
would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his
wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the
least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" [834
He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now 864]
frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom
he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was
sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books.
After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

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* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[1] [i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Unzet. - Analyst]

159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at
this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away,
because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing
chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in
868 Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking,
for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His
brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he
complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking
pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them.
515 This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added
Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of
842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once,
when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it
was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and
Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up
in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and
Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found
them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was
necessary was that the two women should exchange presents.
This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child
of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any
unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth
month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be
altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this
828 way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite
sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be
the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's
eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she
857 is good to the other children and likes looking after the house,
she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows
(a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds.
While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not
like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the
latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the
child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex
of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

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the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter 842
it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, 159
conformed in appearance with the popular conception of 831
these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so preoccupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers [137]
he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun. [157]

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The *Chōtembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was 159
fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre [164]
gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has [212]
never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life 159
his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to 595
marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chōtembu divides his time between the

159 two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the
[595] senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun,
but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she
has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family
working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think
she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told
her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she
finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince
[832] her. I should add, however, that her advances were always
made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the
family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until
relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three
years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of
[464 Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where
463] he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still
employed. He superintends most local building, and with
the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the
woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at
[582] nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not
live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five
years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his
father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry
again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says
he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where
there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk
in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do?
Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but
without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it
is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich,
[556] since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a
proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as
[558] up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to
live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One
does not want to be a burden to others.

Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, 159
his wife being four years younger. He had already started [582]
his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in
Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years,
when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. [464]
Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he [391]
was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result
still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was [862]
not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was
a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched
at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot
bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first
left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that
he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told
me they were very anxious while he was away from home
and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes [861]
beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in
the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him
that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him.
Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring
than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any
way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking [191]
Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has [464
just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last 483]
eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was
still away from home his parents decided that it was time 159
for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was 584
too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy
of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi
came home the following year he at once made it clear that
he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged
marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would
choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the
arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of
affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now 159
thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is 585 588

159 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi
585 will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done
588 this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There
would be no objection to him marrying what would
theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so.
159 [837 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with
his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when
he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own
[191 language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in
the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all
official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has
not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life,
but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

[582] Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters
in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live
with her husband until after his return from Gangtok.
Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge
[462] of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the
reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according
to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to
drink. She has a pleasing open face, but her appearance
is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came
originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her
old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living.
[301 She has better jewellery than any other women in the
423] village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private
fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no
private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls
[581] are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the
best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama
and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power
to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort
[684] of offences would merit her interference and she replied,
without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse
inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that
it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman,
although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality,
everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out
of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

* * * * *

The Inebu Dorje Lopõn is a widow of sixty-two and lives
alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her
own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take
place for another two days. Her husband, who died many
years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje
Lopõn liked having a co-wife, because it made her house-work very much lighter. The husband used to spend alter-nate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause
of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period imme-diately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men
and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had
a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did
not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but
has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next
year, is at present living at the home of his future bride.
The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje
Lopõn has very little money of her own friends have sub-scribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own
father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her
necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china
stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke
had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of
miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

* * * * *

159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[164] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge
pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-
deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used
occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon
which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when
it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies
had been performed the boils remained, and even increased
in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why
they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced
to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left,
being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-
shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through
the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest grand-
daughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never
saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced
beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of
prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange
occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have
caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of
which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take
care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she
keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she
obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling,
which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly
hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as
level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain per-
manently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian 159
teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be 754
thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu- [776]
Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did
this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it [682
within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's 673]
own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma
Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his
wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her
house; and died three months later. She commenced by [753]
spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery:
hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black
and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a
very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage,
and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from
him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill [776]
people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was believed that she always carried the poison on her person, and for this reason he followed her to the fields and completely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly 159
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159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this
Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
782 human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two
chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were
supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ran to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire; and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

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Pemba, the son of Datoop.

[301]

His wife; and on the left a cousin.

[21]

[415]

Conversation piece.

[facing p. 96]

173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

159 lived nearby. She it was who had tried to prevent Karma's mother from going out that night, telling her that she ought not to leave her husband at such a time. The two boys, seeing the state their father was in, now started to cry; and when the old woman heard them she ran over to see what had happened. She asked their father what was the matter. He tried to speak, but was unable to make any sound. The old woman now went outside, to a place where there was a small prayer-wall. From here she shouted down to Karma's mother, who was in a house just below. At first she did not hear, and it was only after the old woman had called three or four times that she made any reply. She came hurrying up, wondering what was the matter, and bringing with her the promised liver. She rushed to her husband and threw herself upon him. As soon as she realised that he was dead she burst into tears; and as she cried she walked anxiously about the room clutching at things as she passed to and fro. In the meantime the old woman blew up the fire and piled more wood upon it. The two brothers still did not realise what had happened, and thought their father was asleep.
159 When Karma tried to approach him the old woman pulled
763 him away: "What are you doing?" she said, "your father is here no more." At the same time she tried to console the widow and told her not to cry. Shortly after this Karma's uncle came up to the house; and as soon as he arrived he went to the body and bent its legs. This is always done to a corpse; but at the time Karma wondered what was happening. The three adults now consulted together; and decided to go quietly and call a certain Tashi, a Lama who was helping to perform the marriage ceremony. Tashi came and sat at the feet of the body, which was placed with its head turned away from him. Karma and his brother still did not realise what had happened and started to laugh and play, whereupon the Lama reproved them. Karma remembers Tashi making a queer sort of whining noise while he spoke to the corpse. He did this three times; but neither he nor his brother was frightened and went on playing all the time.

After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into 159 a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what 763 had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the 159 house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people 764 now gathered at the house. One man took a burning firebrand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the doorstep by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own 159 even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other [848] was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against
the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later
on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice; and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
861 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that
his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him; then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

the ground shredding a bamboo. He playfully kicked the 159
ball of twine which his father had just been making. This 861
made him very angry and he threw his knife at him; the scar of this he has to this day. He never loved his adopting parents. They used to beat him a lot on the back, and this always made him belch. Whenever he stole they tied his hands together with brushwood and held them over the fire. Although this never injured them it frightened him very much, and he decided to give up stealing.

Karma was now very unhappy. Although his adopting 159
parents were rich they gave him only a second-hand knife and some old and worn-out clothes. His mother, who was still very poor, had married again, and from time to time he used to go and see her. Whenever he did this he used always to take a little food, which he had saved out of the little that was given him. When he was about sixteen he decided to return to his own home. His mother asked him why he had come and told him to go back; but his stepfather remained silent. At that time Karma's two brothers and his eldest sister, who was already married, were living at home with their mother. While he was still feeling rather unsettled his elder brother said to him: "Why not stay at home and let us work the fields together; after all are we not real brothers?" Karma was fond of his elder brother, but did not care very much for his mother; but he decided to stay and help them work in the fields. After he had been at home about a month two men came from his adopting father's village. He was husking rice at the time. The two men came straight up to him and told him he must return with them; but this he refused to do. They then told him that his adopting father had bought a grindstone in a nearby village and that he wanted him to carry it home. A few days later he and his brother did take the grindstone over; but in order not to be seen they left it in an out-house and stole quietly away. Some weeks after this Karma's adopting father, whose name was Pashu, himself arrived. He had come over to attend a ceremony which the second Dorje-Lopön was performing

159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopōn was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's stepfather was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding
593 life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

837 After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's
762 elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re-
692 sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

replied that since the woman had herself come and implored 159
him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible.
A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to
give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to
be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies.
When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a
load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain.
These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he
said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more
than this he would not say. The same evening, when they 159
were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother 762
climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the [224]
poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some
minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about
being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly
raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into
the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and
then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself
with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand
and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near.
His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand
and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him
to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried
to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his
tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly
clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He
shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some
wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being [157]
a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together
and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this
time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a
few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell 159
in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a
man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time,
but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since 159
she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's 591

159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in
order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma
lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435 which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he
was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
787 the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by
becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for 159
several more years; but on the death of the former's step- [591]
father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in
1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married
again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of
which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of
the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at
present keeps house for him. Last year he was again be-
trothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime
his future bride already has a baby seven months old.
Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with [834]
his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her;
and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even
went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary
formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought
it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he
is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants
he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed
talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the [157]
average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a
somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to
him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-
commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order
others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari,
and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey
orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is
proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth.
He is the type that in an European culture would be found
standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a
cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly
degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to
a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the
Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an 159
active member of the local monastery and appears in many 531

159 of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is
531 the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was
bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar
running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in
the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his
way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome.
The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker
of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who
are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving
to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about
fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery.
At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and
when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an
531 artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at
159 Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of
874 its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he
465 took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one
rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his
course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper
vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as
individual skill in painting. He says that having completed
the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse
than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to
amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of
paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects
he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure
or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own
house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chōtembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

[224
273
415]

The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

[facing p. 106]

142
291
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[411
623]

Chala Mandal, the Head-man of Lingtem.

[333]

Lepcha in national dress.

[facing p. 107]

159 difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De.
531 This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not
874 because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was
the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was
coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since
it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no
attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade.
During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without
a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many
drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon
that he was able to draw them from memory without a
mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture
known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and
legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said,
was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it.
During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the
details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember
all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce
any particular one for which he may be asked. He might
almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he
does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into
his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does
not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the
same subject if painted by two different artists: since the
subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He
thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than
those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from
the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote
his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely
[322] a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was
also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images,
which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan.
Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the
mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked
out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green.
The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

531 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-
874 darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery
792 has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159 I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's
622 leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about
775 the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun,
[764] and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself 159
into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been 622
troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas 775
have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been
decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will
not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who
lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, 783
but he always refused to come; and it was only after being
offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented
to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When
we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen,
where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in
front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of
butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a
cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a
bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana
leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the
demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by
asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored
them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he
used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald
description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about
a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local
Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and
placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which
was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son.
This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a
substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending
these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we
were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most
welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy
chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and 342
has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with 622
gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the 159
shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is
not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having
"running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another
boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the
death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he
was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then
married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon
the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married
a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not
care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own
home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with
wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no
ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were
handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two
brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an
only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is
this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will
never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was
laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama,
who thought that if there were any more children they would
claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the
property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had
not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father
was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die
out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own
biological father. He appears to have been a man of

outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an 159
old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their 837
first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his
promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much 159
thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been 584
doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of 622
young people principally in terms of their suitability as
possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays
nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this
duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman,
but merely as an experienced member of the community
whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take
him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he
is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a
position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course
settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in
cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later
thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know
the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for
this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, 159
and although he can neither read nor write he is able to 622
quote without hesitation or mistake details of local administration [212]
which one would normally expect to find only
in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being
illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite [153]
extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others
because he has to remember everything "in his heart and
belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because
he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great
deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the
monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only
ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with
me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair,
and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

159 Mandal, however, they represented the height of comfort
622 and he begged me to give him one as a parting gift. This
did; and the last view I had of him was as he disappeared int
the forest, with the chair perched precariously on his head.

* * * * *

602 Although extremely laborious it would be possible to show
by means of charts, the connection between the variou
people of Lingtem. Nearly everybody is related, either b
blood or marriage, to everyone else. In a general accoun
such as this, however, these details would not make for eas
reading, and I propose therefore to reserve them fo
publication in some appropriate scientific journal.

PART THREE

MAGIC AND SPELLS

[p. 113]

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CHAPTER 7

Exorcism and Other Magical Practices

754 IN the wild and mountainous forests of Sikkim "it is fitting," writes Mme. David-Neel, "that sorcery should hold sway. The so-called Buddhist population is practically Shamanist and a large number of mediums: Bönpos, Pawos, Bunting and Yabas of both sexes, even in the smallest hamlets, transmit the messages of gods, demons and the dead."

I have already made a number of scattered references to these people, and shall now try to disentangle the extremely muddled and conflicting Lepcha ideas concerning them.

756 In the first place, it seems clear that prior to the advent of Lamaism in Sikkim the only recourse the Lepchas had to their demons and gods was through the medium of *Mun* and *Padim*. According to the dictionary the former word means a "vagrant singing priest"; it can also be used to denote "an exorciser; or any experienced person." Padim, on the other hand, is given as "one unacquainted with religion and exorcism; or belonging to the laity"; but this meaning was not known in Lingtem. The difference between the two is not at all clear, nor are their powers strictly defined; but whereas both men and women may become Mun, it is impossible for a woman to be a Padim. The position seems to have some points in common with the Shamanism of Siberia; for whereas the Padim's god is male, that of the Mun is female. A Padim has power over certain demons only; but a Mun has power over all. From time to time a Mun becomes "possessed"; but a Padim never. A Padim receives no instruction in his duties; and such esoteric knowledge as he

756 possesses is revealed to him in dreams. Although there were several Padim in Lingtem no one seemed to employ them, preferring always to call in a Mun. The difference between the two seems to be similar to that between a chemist, for instance, and a doctor, the Mun, of course, representing the latter.

756 There is, so far as I know, no ceremony which Mun
793 perform in Lingtem that in a more orthodox Lamaist society could not be performed equally well by Lamas: and while the latter have usurped many of the Mun's functions, at the present time the two work side by side in perfect amity, perhaps because of the equable Lepcha temperament. There is not the slightest rivalry between them, and when a Lama is called in to advise he will often recommend some ceremony for which a Mun is necessary.

756 A man does not become a Mun or Padim by inclination, but because of an irresistible compulsion manifested through some illness. Most of those with whom we talked, although they liked the presents that their patients brought them, would have preferred to be like ordinary men. There is only a certain number in every clan; and when one dies the talent passes on. Thus, although it is possible for a mother and son both to be Mun the talent is not hereditary; nor is it necessary for a man to be a Padim before becoming a Mun, although this sometimes happens.

Gongyop, the most popular Mun in Lingtem, became one only five years ago. He is at present forty-eight, and was a Padim for twenty years before he became a Mun. When he was in his early twenties he was taken very ill; and was weak and listless for a long time. The cause of his illness was eventually diagnosed, and it was seen that only by becoming a Padim could he recover his health. He could eat no rice, nor could he drink *chi;* and his limbs felt as though they had been tied up, and he could not walk. He remained in this state for nearly two years. However, as soon as the cause of his trouble was discovered he rapidly recovered. He became a Padim by the mere performance of the necessary ceremony;

but later on a Mun appeared to him in a dream and told 75
him what to do. Nowadays he always dreams before a [78]
ceremony, and thus learns what action he has to take. During the course of these dreams he speaks with Kings of Sikkim, Europeans, and all sorts of other people. Actually it is a demon who is speaking to him, but it has chosen to adopt this form.

Before becoming a Mun Gongyop was ill for nearly three years, and during all this time lay almost like dead, the symptoms being the same as with his previous illness. He was visited by both Mun and Lamas; and both divined that he was being troubled by the Mun's own private god; and that the only way he could recover was to make this god his own. Part of the ceremony was done by a Lama; but the most important part, known as *Rum-Keuk*, was done by a female Mun. An ox was slaughtered [782]
and part of its flesh, together with grain and butter, was offered to the gods by the Mun. She was offered five rupees in payment for her services; but refused to accept any money until Gongyop had completed his studies: she took only the head and two legs of the ox, together with its vital organs. These had formed the actual ceremonial offering. Gongyop did not understand the words she used during the ceremony as she spoke in a special esoteric language; but in any case he was so ill at the time that he could not even drag himself outside the house for the purposes of nature: he was unable to see properly; nor could he hear. He remained by her side during the ceremony and from time to time she waved things over him. Before the actual physical signs of his illness developed he became as one mad. He would wander aimlessly about without knowing where he was going: sometimes he went to other people's houses, and sometimes he would roam in the forest. He never knew what he was doing; nor did he afterwards remember where he had been. Sometimes he had the feeling that he could walk very fast, as though he was being transported on air. He believes that in this way he

covered immense distances.* During this time he was unable to recognise people; not even his own wife. During the later stages of the illness he used to dream every night that he was travelling all over the world. He believes that in this way he visited Europe, and often went to Tibet and Bhutan. He could speak all languages, and see all things. During the ceremony the Mun, who later became his teacher, fed him with *chi*, put a rupee into his hand, and placed a ceremonial scarf round his neck. She then told him that from that day the Mun's special god would be with him, and that he must therefore learn the work. He started to recover from that very day, and was able to commence his studies almost at once. His teacher stayed with him for three days more, and a month later he went to her home, which was in a village on the other side of the hill, taking with him a load of *chi* as a present.

It was three years before Gongyop was able to practise as a Mun. He did not stay with his teacher all this time; sometimes he remained with her for ten days; sometimes for several weeks: but in between he would try and commit to memory the things that she had taught him. He had to learn the names of all the demons; where they lived, and the various means of communicating with them; also the sacrifice which each demanded. In addition to this he was also required to commit to memory the story of the creation, a shortened version of which I have given at the commencement of Chapter 4. The complete story takes more than

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* Mme. David-Neel states that some Tibetan ascetics indulge in a practice known as *lung-gom*. This is a special kind of training "which is said to develop uncommon nimbleness and especially enables its adepts to take extraordinarily long tramps with amazing rapidity. Belief in such a training and its efficacy has existed for many years in Tibet, and men who travelled with supernormal rapidity are mentioned in many traditions. . . . The performance does not consist in racing at full speed over a short distance as is done in our sporting matches, but of tramping at a rapid pace and without stopping during several successive days and nights."

Mme. David-Neel was fortunate enough actually to witness an exhibition of *lung-gom*. I have not myself seen it, nor is it practised by Lepchas, although they would appear to have heard of it. Chapter VI of her book, *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, which deals with this and kindred subjects, is of great interest.

three days to tell. Gongyop was very anxious that we should 756
write it down; but the flesh [illegible] not sufficiently strong! At
the end of his third year an ox was sacrificed, and his teacher
pronounced him as fit, although he has still a number of
things to learn. He cannot, for instance, do the *Sanglion*, a
special rite performed at death. He thinks it a curse to be a
Mun, and hopes his son will never have to be one. In his
opinion a Lama is more powerful than a Mun; but the latter
is probably more efficient when it is a question of merely
driving demons away.

I asked Gongyop if the Padim god was angry when he 756
became a Mun. "No," he said, "the two gods are husband 776
and wife, and the Padim god was glad because the Mun had
come to share houses (i.e. Gongyop's body) with him. The
Padim god does not call his wife, but is naturally glad when
she arrives." The spirits are not always present in his body.
When they come he feels a heavy burden, as though he is
carrying an immense weight. These particular gods normally
live in a place on the other side of Kinchinjunga, which
mountain they have to cross to reach him. At the time of
their arrival he feels a weight pressing him down. When they
are in possession of his body he is able to prophesy. At such 756
times he does not know what he is saying, nor has he after- 787
wards any recollection. He cannot call the spirits up at will 776
and only prophesies twice a year: once in summer and again
in winter. He generally feels ill the evening before, and only
becomes normal again from cock-crow on the morning
following the "possession." He feels heavy and depressed;
also he cannot stand noise. He trembles all the time and
sweats profusely. During this time he must pray to the gods
to find out what must be done. He has no particular feelings
at the time of possession; but at the moment when the
spirits actually enter his body everything goes black in front
of him, after which he remembers no more. He sits cross-legged
on the floor making offerings; by his side is a necklace
of flowers and a decorated stick known as *Sagyi-patung*.
Suddenly he feels as though he is being poked all over with

756 the stick: this is the god arriving to take possession of his
787 body. He is now no longer himself. The god takes up the
776 necklace and puts it on its head. It gets up trembling and goes outside the house, where it walks up and down a few times. It comes in again and sits down in its former place. Everyone keeps very quiet and still; even the children make no noise. It offers *chi* and chants a little. Now it blows on everyone. Very quietly, it begins to speak. Soon, darkness comes over it, and it steals away. The god is gone, having made its prophecy. Gongyop recovers consciousness. Later, the others will tell him what the god has said.

756 A Mun offers sacrifices to Itpumu, who, as we have
782 already seen, was the creator of all things, even of Lamas. The god cannot be approached direct, but only through the medium of his demon children. It sometimes happens that the twice-yearly ceremony, when prophecies are made, is performed by more than one Mun in each village: but even when this is done it is said that their prophecies do not differ in essentials; and apparently no steps are taken to prevent collusion. We were unfortunate not to witness one of these ceremonies; but from what little I have seen I think it is exceedingly doubtful if a real state of trance is ever induced. One or two people were openly sceptical, and said that the prophecies were made in such a low and indistinct voice that it was possible to interpret them almost as one wished: others, however, were reticent. There seems no doubt, however, that they are always confined to generalisations: "although the village is suffering from coughs and colds at present, there is no immediate danger, and the epidemic will shortly cease." Things such as this were commonly said, but they can hardly be called prophetic; and in the meantime I prefer to keep an open mind until such time as I have collected evidence which would be accepted by a scientist.

756 Gongyop says that during ordinary ceremonies, when no
787 god has taken possession of his body, he sometimes sees phantom dogs, pigs, or monkeys coming into the room. If he looks carefully they disappear at once; but the moment he

concentrates on the service they appear again immediately. 756
If one of these animals comes right into the room and is seen 787
to be eating something it is a sure sign that the sick person
will die. He does not tell the patient what he has seen, but
merely contents himself with saying that the illness is serious
and that the ceremony may not be completely successful. If
he sees a pig it means that Lum Dong Mung is the cause of [776]
the trouble: if a red butterfly, then it is Arot Mung to whom
offerings must be made. This last is the demon which causes
people to commit suicide, and requires careful handling.
Sometimes he will appear to see a dirty and aged woman
enter the room: this is Sor Mung, which causes coughs and
colds.

It is generally believed that Lepchas know a great deal 824
about the medicinal value of plants. In the days when they 756
were dependent upon forest produce this was probably true,
but it certainly does not apply at the present day. One
would have expected knowledge of this kind to be handed
down from generation to generation, and to find it part of the
stock-in-trade of the Mun. His cures, however, are obtained
entirely by means of sacrifices. He gives no medicine, nor [751]
does he prescribe the wearing of charms and amulets, the
making of these being the province of the Lamas.

For ordinary divinations a Mun uses either a necklace or 756
an egg. The egg is placed against the forehead, and the eyes 787
are closed. Gongyop says that when he does this it helps him
to concentrate. At one ceremony at which we were present
he said that by means of the egg he could see a long
straight road, continuing into the distance. This meant
illness in the near future; but nothing very serious. On
another occasion he saw a circular road: this meant serious
illness. And once, when he saw a circular road which was [164]
arranged in the form of a knot, several people died of
dysentery shortly after.

We noticed that he was wearing a rosary twined around his
wrist. We asked him what it was for, but at first he seemed
very embarrassed, and would say nothing about it. Later on,

756 he said that while there was no particular harm in other
787 people catching sight of his beads he must never discuss them,
except with other Padim or Mun. If he did the god would be
angry and refuse in future to help him; moreover, he was in
the habit of using this particular rosary to determine the
outcome of his love affairs. If he talked about it there was a
chance that it might play him false! And so he begged to be
excused. As he said this he tucked it away, well out of sight.

756 It is believed that when a Mun dies his soul returns to its
> 775 celestial home, where it changes into the god Hit, the
guardian of which is Pong Rum, the patron of all hunters.
[764] The body is always buried and not treated in any special way.
Even the soul like that of ordinary people needs direction
after death, or it will not know which road to take. A Mun
must be careful never to touch a corpse. If he did so his god
would leave him for the time being, and he would be ill for
at least two months. There is no harm in his looking upon a
dead body; nor will anything ensue if he touches the bodies of
[783] dead animals. Should he happen by mistake to touch a
corpse he must get a Lama to cleanse his body with consecrated water, at the same time burning incense in the room while this is being done. After this he will regain his powers; but nothing, it may be noted, can cause the god permanently to desert the Mun.

757 In cases of illness in Lingtem a Lama is always called in first. He decides what treatment is necessary and then arranges accordingly. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember attending any ceremony, apart, of course, from purely religious festivals, at which a Lama and Mun were not both officiating; a regular Harley Street conspiracy!

756 In addition to Lamas and Muns, Lepchas also have recourse to people known as Nunjimu. This word does not appear in the dictionary: but the verb *Nun* (from which the word is presumably derived), which is Tibetan, is given as meaning "to be insensible, or cataleptic." These people are not nowadays often employed, and in Lingtem there was only one. According to Gongyop the original Nunjimus

came from Tibet, and I presume them to be descendants of 756 the pre-Lamaist priests of that country. I have never come across them in Tibet; neither does Waddell nor Mme. David-Neel make any specific mention of them.* I imagine that they are now found only in the more remote parts of Sikkim, and possibly in Eastern Nepal.

Nunjimu are always women, and their male counterpart is known as Pawo. There is, however, no difference in their functions. When a Nunjimu dies the talent passes to some female member of the family, that of a Pawo to a male; but in neither case does it necessarily pass from parent to child. As in the case of Mun and Padim a person only becomes a Nunjimu or Pawo by means of illness, through some form of temporary madness. These people work by dancing themselves into a trance, after which they are believed to be able to diagnose the cause of an illness. It should be noted, however, that they never prescribe any treatment: having made known the cause of disease its cure is carried out by a Mun or Lama. Their functions have been to a great extent already usurped by the latter and they are only called in when a Mun or Lama has failed to effect a cure.

Tafoor's youngest child had been ill for several weeks with 756 what was undoubtedly whooping-cough. He had carried out 755 various Lamaistic services and had also called in a Mun. Finally, with unexpected forethought, he sent the child away to a neighbouring village, hoping that the change of air might do it good. In spite, however, of all his efforts the child got steadily worse. As a last resort he decided to call in the Nunjimu. We had tried several times to get this old woman to tell us about her work, but she always refused: and on this occasion she warned Tafoor not to let me know what she was doing, or the spirit would refuse to function. He, however, was a sceptic, and had only called her in at the earnest

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* Waddell, however, mentions an inferior type of sorcerer known as Lha-Ka, or "God's mouthpiece." They "are found frequently in Western Tibet, and may be females. They somewhat resemble the *Nan-jorma* [*sic*] and Pawo of Sikkim, but are not devil dancers like the latter."

756 request of his wife: but in order not to frighten her I was
755 given a place behind a screen.

When I arrived I noticed that the altar had already been adorned with a number of small rice *tormos*,[1] which, strangely enough, had been made by a Mun. There were also several bowls filled with parched grain, which had been specially prepared by Tafoor himself. The Nunjimu was dressed in her ordinary clothes, but on her head she wore a thick wreath made from alternate layers of red and white wool. This is called *Peteuk*. She was alone in the room, and was sitting cross-legged on the floor, with her face towards the altar. To one side was a bowl of burning incense, and on the other a bamboo holder filled with *chi*, out of which she drank from
[776] time to time. In her left hand she held a bell and in her right the special sacred drum called *Damaru*. This is shaped like a large double egg-cup. Between its faces are attached a pair of pendent leather knobs and a long beaded flap as a handle. When the drum is held by the upper part of the handle and jerked alternately to right and left the knobs strike the faces of the drum. It is often used by Lamas to mark the pauses between different forms of worship.

The Nunjimu started by ringing the bell and playing the drum, slowly at first, with a regular rhythmic beat, at the same time chanting in a low and droning voice. After a time she increased the pace. Nothing happened for over an hour. By now the noise was maddening and reminded me of machine-gun fire: I felt a strong desire to sleep. Suddenly she gave a convulsive shudder and started to work her knees rapidly about. One or two others now came into the room, the Hlaribu amongst them. He paid no attention to what was happening and sat quietly in a corner turning his prayer-wheel. Once or twice Tafoor's wife, with the sick child on her back, came into the room to replenish the drinks, but at no time did she pay any attention to the performance. The Mun Katel was also present. He, however, was no longer
[523] sober and dozed with his head sagging down between his feet; "contemplating his anus," was how the others described it.

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[1] [i.e., dough cones.--Analyst]

756

The Nunjimu attempting to induce a state of trance.

[778]

After the divination. Note the special woollen wreath worn by the Nunjimu; also the drum and bell which she is holding.

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The sick child. This photograph also illustrates the normal method of carrying babies.

[facing p. 124]

756 it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any
[514] notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare
755 foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its
[753] progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

756 emphatic. I felt as though I was waking out of a heavy sleep:
755 there was a strong desire to yawn, and I noticed that the others did the same. Quite suddenly the drumming ceased; and after a moment of silence one again became aware of other sounds; someone was husking rice outside the house, and fowls were scratching in the veranda. The Nunjimu took up a handful of grain and scattered it on the altar, snatched off her woollen wreath and got up from the floor. The performance was over.

756 While the dance was in progress I had come out from behind my screen and sat down on the floor amongst the others. The Nunjimu now expressed surprise at seeing me, and said that she had been unaware of my presence. This is the only circumstance that makes me feel that perhaps she was in a trance. I was otherwise not at all impressed; nor, I think, was Tafoor. I asked her to come outside and let me take a photograph. Katei told her not to; but she complied willingly, and even danced again for my benefit, roaring with laughter all the time. I got the impression that she did not really believe in the show herself. When it was over no one discussed what she had been saying; nor did she herself ask what the god had said. This was strange in view of the fact that she was presumed not to know what was happening while the spirit was in possession of her body. Although her speech was at times inaudible, the voice in which she spoke was her own. She had none of the tricks of the European medium, and altogether her show was as unimpressive as theirs. In due course the child recovered.

Lepchas sometimes also employ people known as Yaba and Yama, the former being the male. There were none in Lingtem; but from what I have seen of them in other places they appear to be exactly the same as Pawo and Nunjimu. They are said to be very common in Eastern Nepal and are usually members of the Limbu tribe. In Sikkim, they are found only in villages occupied by both Nepalis and Lepchas; and in the same way that the Pawo and Nunjimu were introduced from Tibet probably came to be incorporated in Lepcha society through intermarriage with Nepalis.[756]

Before leaving the subjects of illness and sorcery it will be 793 convenient to describe the Lepcha Lama in his function as 755 healer. I have already noted that this is his principal employment, but he also takes part, of course, in the services of general worship held at the monastery from time to time. In Tibet the two functions are not generally combined: a Lama is either a sorcerer or a priest, but never both. There is of course a close connection between the two and they often work in conjunction. In Sikkim, however, this differentiation is not recognised, at least not amongst the Lingtem Lamas, and the two distinct and really quite separate functions are here combined.

During our stay in Lingtem we had frequent opportunities of seeing Tafoor at work. It would be of no interest to give the details of every ceremony we attended, for except in minor details they did not greatly differ. I propose, therefore, to describe only one such occasion; and since it is a fair sample of them all, to tell the story in some detail.

I have already mentioned that Pichi, the son of Datoop, had spent some years in Gangtok learning to be a carpenter. He finished his course and had returned to Lingtem in March. He looked thoroughly ill; anæmic and emaciated, he appeared to be wasting away. He was unable either to eat or work, and could only drag himself about with difficulty. Datoop brought him one day to see us, when he complained of pain in the heart and side. He asked if we could give him medicine, but there was nothing we could do beyond recommending him to go into Gangtok for treatment. This was shortly after our arrival; and since there were at the time many new things to see and do we thought no more about him.

Pichi, however, got steadily worse, when his father then called in Tafoor. Datoop is himself a Lama, but it would [576] have been a breach of professional etiquette for him to prescribe for any member of his own household.

We went to the house about half-past five and found that an

793 ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were
755 drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door
Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying
themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled
with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them
embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.*
In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a
[373] dozen in number. These had already been lighted and
formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in
front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the
778 black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very
elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned
with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers.
At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully
in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of
unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for
me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was
about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently
displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown
protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging
below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been
sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously
coloured.

755 While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient
793 remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing
some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in
front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition
of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

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* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is
"a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In
Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir
Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have
never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite un-
founded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form
of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual
became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in
number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way,
perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became
[531] stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no
use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he
represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

finished all present went into the altar-room and prostrated 793
themselves several times before the altar. The children, 755
however, omitted this mark of respect. In one corner were
two small girls aged about ten and twelve. They were lying [516
on the floor with their knees drawn up, when the mother of 864]
the elder, catching sight of her daughter, told her not to
display her vulva. This was apparently a quite ordinary
remark, for nobody took any notice.

All this time the two Lamas continued to chant, while still playing their cymbals and drum. While this was going on Karma came in and placed a small bag filled with grain round the central neck of the *Go-sum;* he was very drunk at the time. The chanting and playing still continued, and now the *Go-sum* was turned completely round: it now had its back towards the altar. Pichi's mother pulled a few threads out of his coat and dropped them on to the figure. Now Karma took a handful of powdered maize and scattered it on the floor, in the form of a line leading towards the door. This was the road by which the evil spirit, having been expelled from Pichi's body, would finally leave the house. No one might cross this path; and if one wished to get from one side of the room to the other it was necessary to go round and behind the figure, thus avoiding the path. Several men, Karma among them, now lifted the *Go-sum* up and carried it out of the house, carefully following the line of powdered maize. The figure was taken to a spot about four hundred yards away, which had been previously indicated by the Lamas, a boy going in front with a lighted brand to show the way. It was there abandoned and would be eaten by dogs during the night. When it is found that an offering of this sort is not consumed it means that the demons have not accepted it, and that the patient will get no relief from that particular sacrifice.

Singing and drinking were continued throughout the night, but we left as soon as the ceremony was over.

We did not see Pichi for nearly a month, and by then he 755
had completely recovered. He was fat and well, and had a

755 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

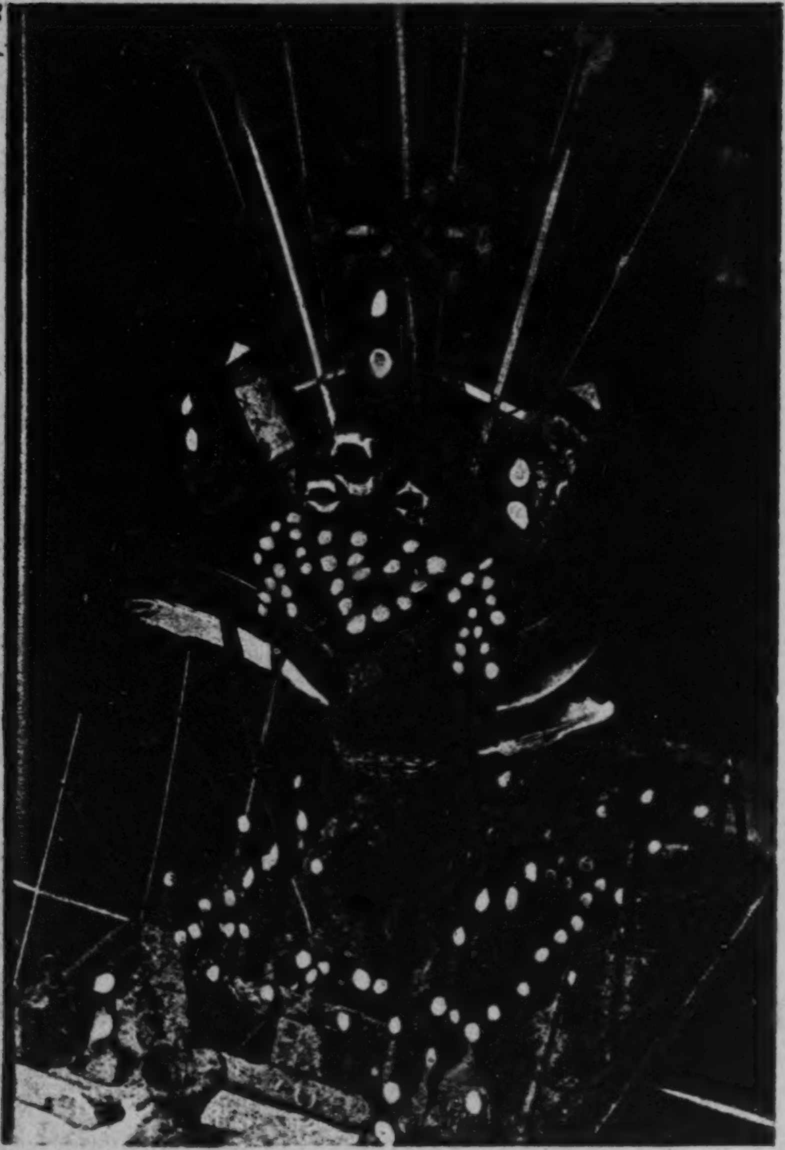
THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.



A completed *Ge-sum.*

[Facing p. 130]

THE TRIMMINGS

778 The following list reads something like a recipe in a
775 cookery book. Its understanding, however, is not essential; and anyone who finds such things as "Mrs. Beeton" dull may skip this paragraph and proceed direct to the story.

Having completed the figure of the Go-sum, take the following:

Lukor Chu-Ni; twelve. These are small *torma,* about two inches in height, pressed out flat and stamped with a design in flour. They represent the separate years of the Tibetan twelve-year cycle.

Tako; four. These are miniature cups of dough. They are filled with *chi,* after which bits of raw meat are added.

Chumi; one. A *chumi* is the ordinary Lepcha word for a lamp. This miniature one is made of dough, as is its wick. It cannot therefore be lighted.

Gyachen Diji; four of these are required. These are small *torma* with spreading bases, and represent the gods of the four directions. One is placed at each corner of the figure.

Par Chongo: one. This is a long strip of dough, rather like a thin and elongated sausage. It has a design pressed upon it in flour and represents the animals, birds, and insects that live entirely on dry land.

Sa Julgu: one. This is similar to the *Par Chongo* but rather shorter in length. It represents snakes, fish, toads and all other such creatures as live in water or under rocks.

Chongbu Tip-gyu: to taste. These are small twists of dough and look like cigars that have been ill treated. They are used for waving over people. Four or five is the usual number.

Diget: twelve. These are small ordinary *tormas* and represent the demons and gods who live in the human world.

Gyukar Nger-get: fourteen. These are double *tormas,* joined together in pairs. They represent old men and women, and are the servants of the Go-sum. The sexes are not distinguished.

778 *Dungay:* nine. Ordinary small *tormas*, which represent the
755 stewards who control the servants.

Sunghliyu: one. A small pointed stick painted red. This is stuck in front and to the right of the figure. It represents its sword.

Thum Shing: two. These are small wooden labels. One is for women, the other for men. They are identical in shape and size; but the male has a design of crosses, thus: × × × ×; and the female is marked like this: # # # #. These labels are said to represent all the people of the inhabited world. The female is placed on the right, the male on the left.

Pung: six. Small sticks representing spinning rods, and hence women.

Chong: six. Thin bamboo slivers representing arrows, and hence men.

The *Pung* and *Chong* are arranged round the figure so as to form a fence. The arrows are on the right, the spinning rods on the left.

Yay: three. A large red one for the bull; a smaller blue one for the pig; yellow for the tiger.

Yay are used in every Lamaist ceremony other than those of a purely religious nature. They vary in size from elaborate erections, some ten feet in height, to the small ones required for the present ceremony, which are only about ten inches high. The *yay* is an arrangement of bamboo masts, on which is built up a geometrical pattern in twine of various colours. The colours and actual arrangement of the strings vary with different ceremonies. Some of them are extremely complicated and take many hours to make. Tafoor said that a great part of his later instruction was confined to the making of *yays*. As it is he now knows how to make many different kinds and carries all the details in his head. It is said that complete instructions for the making of *yays* have been placed on record, but in Lingtem no one possessed a copy of the book.

The *yay* is a sort of devil-trap or house. As soon as a demon

is expelled or summoned it sees the "house" which has been 775
newly made in its honour and settles there in preference to a 755
human habitation. Having entered it becomes entangled in the arrangement of strings and can then be taken with the offering and thrown away. Simple-minded demons can be trapped with a simple kind of *yay:* some, however, are not so silly and can only be caught in an elaborate arrangement that looks like a series of concentric spiders' webs inside several intertwined triangles. It is well known what sort of *yay* is required to catch any particular demon; and it seems that the latter never learn sense.

The three heads of the Go-sum are coloured respectively red, blue, and yellow to match the *yay* which is stuck behind the neck of each.

Gyong-bo: six. These are thin bamboo slivers with tufts of wool at the top and at intervals down their length. They represent *Tarchuk*, or prayer-flags for the living.

When these things have been arranged round the Go-sum the whole is garnished with leaves, brambles and flowers in season. A handful of assorted grain is sprinkled over it, and all is then complete. It is now taken and placed on the ground in front of the altar, after which the ceremony proceeds. The one Tafoor made for me took him the best part of one whole day; and while he was doing it he told me the following story:

THE STORY

There was once a god named Hla-Chongbu-Gadjen, whose 539
second daughter was in the habit of stealing flowers, the property of other gods. Because of this she was expelled from heaven and sent to live in the world. In due course she was reborn in Nepal, at a place called Pe-Yu Chorten.* Little of the girl's early life is known except that she was an orphan, and was taken into the household of the Maharaja of Nepal.

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* This is Tibetan and merely means "(the place of) the Tibetan Chorten." A chorten is a Buddhist tope, or stupa. It is usually in the form of a huge dome.

539 During this time she became pregnant by one of his grooms, and in due course gave birth to a son. The same thing happened with the master of the dogs; and again with the steward in charge of the pigs. For many years she lived with her three sons and earned her living by selling eggs and chickens. She must have had an immense poultry farm, for in a short time she is said to have accumulated no less than three lakhs of rupees, or in English money twenty thousand pounds! When she had accumulated all this wealth she one day took a bullock skin and asked for an audience with the Maharaja. She laid the skin on the ground in front of him and begged him to give her a piece of land of similar size. She wanted it, she said, to build a chorten. Seeing the insignificant size of the piece of land required the Maharaja readily consented: but when the girl got back she shredded the skin and spun it into a long rope. She then arranged it on the ground in the form of a circle: it covered several acres of land, and on this she arranged to build her chorten. She started to work on her own; but finding this too arduous she bought an elephant and a donkey, which she used to carry the necessary stones to the site. When the work was only half completed she suddenly died; and was immediately transported to the home of the gods, whence she had originally come.

The chorten remained in this half-finished state for many years, when the eldest of the three sons called his brothers to him with a view to completing the work. When it was ready the three brothers offered it ceremonially to the gods; each at the same time making a personal request.

The eldest brother asked that he might reincarnate as a very great god. His request was granted, and in due course he was reborn at Budh-Gaya as the god Sangay Chomden. The second brother now made his request; he asked that instead of reincarnating in the ordinary way he might be reborn in the bud of a flower: also he wished to be the overlord of all the demons and gods inhabiting the human world. Both these requests were granted. The youngest brother asked that of all human beings he might be the wisest, and a great and a holy lama.

When the three brothers had made their requests the elephant imagined that his turn would come. He knew that he had worked as hard as anyone, and was wondering what he could ask of the gods. To his surprise, however, the three brothers asked no boon for him, and he found that he was completely ignored. He therefore prayed that he might be reincarnated in some form which would make him the master of the eldest brother. The same thing happened to the donkey: he too was forgotten, so he quietly prayed that when he was reborn he might have control of the youngest brother.

The elephant was the first to die, and he was shortly followed by the donkey; so that as the animals had prayed so did it come to pass. The elephant reincarnated as Deut Hlajen; and in this state he later quarrelled a great deal with Sangay-Chomden, the form in which the eldest brother was reborn. One day his minister came to him in great perturbation and told him that Sangay's death had been predicted to take place in three days' time; but in order to preserve the relative seniority in the next reincarnation it was essential for Deut Hlajen to die first.

Hlajen had six children: Alcohol, Tea, Pigeon, Crow, Rat, and Tobacco, who were born in that order. Since he must now die he called his sons around him, in order to decide which amongst them was capable of carrying on his bad work; for his was an evil spirit. Alcohol spoke up at once: he could lead even great Lamas astray by inflaming their desires. When he heard this Hlajen became slightly weaker and advanced one step towards death; but he was by no means satisfied that he had found a suitable successor. Then Tea spoke: he, too, could do much harm. He could make rich men poor by causing them to buy all sorts of expensive things: the cups, saucers, pots, and so on, necessary for drinking tea; butter too was essential, and this was also expensive. Since tea-drinking quickly becomes a habit, people would soon become impoverished. When the father

539 heard these words he became yet a little weaker; but still he was not satisfied. Now it was Pigeon's turn; he said that he could do harm by fouling the sacred bowls in monasteries. But at this the father only merely smiled, and it had no effect upon his weakness. He then asked Crow what he could do. He answered that by sitting on the top of the poles of prayer-flags, and excreting on the flags below, he could make them ineffective and thus do quite a lot of damage. This pleased the father better and he became noticeably weaker. Finally Rat spoke: "Do not you worry, father," he said; "for I will destroy people's clothing, their books and any food they leave about." But even this did not please Hlajen overmuch. All this time Tobacco was smiling quietly in the corner. "I will go and be born again as a plant," he said; "people will then smoke me. By this means I can gradually destroy the world: moreover, the foul smoke, as it rises to heaven, will be displeasing to the gods." The father was delighted with this suggestion and immediately expired, with a clear conscience and untroubled soul. He was transported straight to Langarshay (?), and in due course reincarnated as the son of the Raja of that place.

He now became very friendly with the son of one of his father's poorer subjects, and the two boys decided to study together with a very famous Lama who lived in the town. One had his lessons in the day-time and the other went at night. After they had been working for some little time the two boys decided to compare their notes. In spite of the fact that they had both studied with the same master, it was apparent that their teaching had been completely different. It appeared the Lama had taught the poor boy properly; but had so instructed the Raja's son that his facts were wrong in every detail. The Raja's son was called Gulung Turba Nakbu, and the poor boy Gulung Tempak, these names having been given them by the Lama when they first came to him to study.

When the boys compared notes and found that nothing agreed they decided to visit the Lama together. When they arrived he told them that Gulung Tempak had learnt everything correctly; but that the Raja's son had misunderstood him and got everything wrong, hiding the fact that he had deliberately taught him thus. He cursed him for being an ignoramus and prophesied that he would turn into an evil character.

The boy now became very troublesome, and by degrees turned into an absolute waster. He left his father's home and lived in a hut at the burning-place, where he fed on human flesh. Seeing the state to which affairs had come to pass, the god Hla Chungba Gadjin decided to take action, and accordingly he sent two minor gods to kill the Raja's son, as, quite apart from the grief he had caused his father, he was giving much trouble to the people of the town.

The two gods he sent were Tadin and Dorje Phukmu. Tadin split him in two by entering his head in the form of a thunderbolt, leaving his body by way of the anus. Dorje Phukmu did likewise, but in the reverse direction. As a result of this harsh treatment he died at once, but immediately reincarnated as Yishay Gumbu, a god with its soul divided into two portions. The smaller portion went down to the world in order again to cause trouble, and was reborn in the womb of a very old woman in the form of a *tanen*, or three-headed hermaphrodite. When the old woman saw what she had given birth to she was terrified. However, she gave the monster her breast, but was horrified to see that it was sucking blood. She decided to act at once, and snatching up a kite's feather she plunged it into the central head (which was that of a bull) of her child, which appeared to die immediately. She then rushed out with the body and carried it away to the junction of several roads. There she left it, telling it that it was a demon and must never come back to the house.

After the *tanen* had been abandoned at the road junction it consumed everything all round it, including even the stones and the demons which lived inside them. No one who

539 passed the spot was safe: he would be eaten up at once. The monster was never satisfied, and was causing trouble all over the place. Because of this the gods decided to send down Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was to remain and control it. Immediately on reaching the earth this god assumed a form identical with the *tanen*, only very much bigger. It had no difficulty in swallowing the *tanen* whole, which it did as soon as the two met. From inside the god's stomach the *tanen* started to grumble at the harsh treatment meted out to it; and so Phapay Jumpa Yung, who was really a compassionate being, at once excreted it on to the ground. As soon as it came to itself again Phapay addressed it thus: "You have eaten up all the people of this neighbourhood, and have done a great deal of damage of every kind. If, in future, you do not obey me implicitly I shall eat you again; and the next time I do so you will remain inside my stomach. If, however, you do as you are told I will give you the control of thirty devils. In order to do this, however, you must remain for ever on the earth."

The *tanen* agreed to do what was asked of it and has remained in the world ever since. That is why, when any of the thirty devils concerned is troubling a person, it is necessary to offer a Go-sum.

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171 With very few alterations this story could be made to read like a tract; but I should be surprised to find that a missionary took any part in its invention! Its real interest, however, lies in the fact that it incorporates most of the known historical details concerning the construction of the famous Bodhnath stupa in Nepal. I was unaware of this at the time, and only came across the connection on my return from Sikkim, when I was reading through Waddell. It is of considerable psychological interest to note the difference between the oral Lepcha version of the story and that given in the printed booklet which is sold to pilgrims at the stupa; and for this reason I give below Waddell's translation in

full. It seems to have been purged of all its coarser details; 539
or were they added by the Lepchas? I think this is not 171
unlikely; and that they have also incorporated the story of
the Go-sum, which receives no mention in the printed version.

* * * * *

"This stupa enshrines the spirit of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and of the Buddhas of three times (i.e., the present, past and future), and of all the Bodhisats, and it holds the Dharmakaya.

"When king Thi-Sron Detsan asked the Guru, at Samyas, to tell him the history of the *Ma-gu-ta* stupa in Nepal, made by the four sons of 'the bestower of gifts,' named 'the poor mother Pya-rdsi-ma (fowl-keeper),' then the Guru thus related (the story):—

"In a former Kalpa—time beyond conception—the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, approached the Tathagatha Akitabha and prayed for the animals immersed in the miry slough, and after saving these he went to mount Potala. There he saw hosts of unsaved animals, innumerable like unto mounds of *murwa* lees, and (seeing this) he wept. Two of his pitying tears were born into Indra's heaven as god's daughters, named respectively Kan-ma and the little Kan-ma or Kan-chun-ma. This latter having stolen in heaven some flowers, was as a punishment reborn in earth, in a low pigherd's family in Maguta in Nepal, under the name of Samvara or 'the Chief Happiness,' her mother's name being Purna. On marriage she had four sons, and her husband's early death left her with the sole care of the family. She with her family undertook the herding and rearing of geese for the wealthy, and having in this pursuit amassed much wealth, the Ma-pya-rdsi-ma (or mother fowl-keeper) decided to build a large stupa in honour of the Tathagatha. She, thereon, went to the king and begged for a site, saying she wanted only so much ground as one hide could cover. The king assented, saying '*Ja-run*,' which literally means 'do' + 'can,' i.e. 'you can do (so).' Then she, cutting a hide into thin thongs (forming a long rope), enclosed that very large space which now is occupied by this chaitya. And she, with her four sons, and a servant, and an elephant and an ass, as beasts of burden, brought earth and stones, and commenced to build this chaitya by their own personal labour.

"Then the king's ministers appealed to the king to stop such an ambitious building, as they asserted its magnificence put to shame the religious buildings of the king and the nobles. But the king answered '*Ka-Sor*'—which literally means 'mouth + (has) spoken'—and so refused to interfere. (Thus is the name of the stupa—'*Ja-run K'a-sor*'—accounted for.)

"After four years, when only the base had been laid, the mother died, but her four sons continued the building till its completion. And in the receptacle was placed one Magadha measure (drona) of the relics of the Tathagatha Kasyapa. This event was celebrated by the manifestation in the sky, above the stupa, of Kasyapa himself, and the circles of celestial Buddhas and Bodhisats, and their hosts of retinue, and amongst showers of flowers the gods contributed divine music and rained perfume. Earthquakes thrice occurred, and through the glory of the assembled divinities there was no darkness for five nights.

"One of the sons then prayed, 'May I in my next re-birth be born as a great scholar (to benefit mankind),' and he was born as Thumni Sambhota (the introducer of the so-called 'Tibetan' character, and the first translator of Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan, *circa* A.D. 650.

"The second son prayed in a similar manner, and was reborn as 'The Bodhisattva' (the abbot of the first monastery of Tibet).

"Then the elephant or *lan-po* (hearing these prayers) said, 'These two, neglecting me who contributed so much assistance, are asking all the good things for themselves, therefore let me be re-born in a form to destroy them or their work.' And he was afterwards re-born as Lan-darma (the persecutor of Lamaism).

"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed 539
that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil 171
of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun
phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the
Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is 755
believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be 753
used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different
devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when
this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any
of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum [214]
is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*.
This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like
the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to
make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this
sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science.
Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely
a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the
same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by
antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering
of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been
caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has
control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any
lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis,
a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown
in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet 755 171

755 and have found no reference to it in any of the books on
171 that country. In view of the fact that the word is pure Tibetan, one would have expected to find it mentioned. Anyone witnessing the ceremony must have been struck by the peculiarities of the figure itself: but there has been no modern account of Tibetan social life, and it is possible that if any of the earlier travellers saw a Go-sum he may have considered it too shocking to describe! The ceremony
[797] is no longer carried out by Lepchas in the Kalimpong district, where missionary influence is strong, but is popular all over Sikkim, where it is held in great esteem by Lepchas and Tibetans alike.

755 Here is an example of treatment of a different kind.
805 Chano's wife had been unwell for several weeks, but was suffering from no specific illness. ~~Her~~ husband, however,
[777] who was himself a Lama, thought there might be something wrong and asked Tafoor to work out a horoscope for the next few months. He did this in our presence; but in order
[777] to make it intelligible it is necessary to understand something of the chronological system current in Tibet, as it is used for indicating lucky and unlucky times as well as the times for much of the worship. Except in official correspondence with the outside world it is in use all over Sikkim.

805 "The Tibetan system of reckoning time, derived from China and India, is based upon the twelve-year and sixty-year cycles of Jupiter. The twelve-year cycle is used for short periods, and the particular year, as in the Chinese style, bears the name of one or other of the twelve cyclic animals:—

1 Mouse (Rat)	1912*	5 Dragon	1916	9 Monkey	1920
2 Ox	1913	6 Serpent	1917	10 Bird (Hen)	1921
3 Tiger	1914	7 Horse	1918	11 Dog	1922
4 Hare (Kite)	1915	8 Sheep	1919	12 Pig	1923,

1935 and so on.

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* The names of animals in brackets are Lepcha variants of the standard Tibetan years. The date opposite each is given as an example of one particular cycle.

"And in the case of the sixty-year cycle these animals are 805 combined with the five elements (namely: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water), and each element is given a pair of animals, the first being considered male and the second female. . . . It is by giving a realistic meaning to the several animals and elements, after which the year is named, that the Lamas arrive at their endless variety of combinations of attraction and repulsion in regard to the casting of horoscopes and the prescriptions of requisite worship and the offerings necessary to counteract the evils thus brought to light."

The twelve-year cycle is known as *Lukor* and every Lepcha is taught the name of the animal corresponding to the year of his birth. For this reason it is possible to compute a person's age with considerable accuracy, an unusual state of affairs in a primitive society. An example will make the working of the system clear: Chimpit was born in the "Pig" year, which came round in the cycle in 1899, 1911, 1923 and 1935. His birth can therefore be definitely placed in 1923. With very old people the computation of ages is more difficult, for it is not always easy to decide whether a person is, for instance, seventy-two or eighty-four. But even so, one is unlikely to be more than twelve years out and can generally arrive at the exact age by comparing the estimate with the known age of some other person.

This same twelve-year cycle is also used by the Gurungs, [177] a tribe inhabiting the southern slopes of the central Nepal Himalaya, as a result of which they are the only Gurkhas whose ages can be computed with accuracy.*

The following treatment which Tafoor prescribed for 751 Chano's wife is preventive rather than curative; it may be 755 compared with the sort of instructions that a doctor gives his patient after a general overhaul.

The patient is being troubled by Dade Mung, a demon sent by some other person. There is also trouble from Tumsi,

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* Cf. my *Handbooks for the Indian Army: "Gurkhas,"* Chapter 7.

751 [531] one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

[776] There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god
when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned
the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the
time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present
living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is
[578] between the two. This trouble has come from some other
person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

possible*; and it might be a good thing to have a figure of a *Gedo* 751
made and abandoned on the path. *Shemen Kyop* should certainly 755
be done, in the near future, since this is clearly indicated.
This consists in taking a picture of Tumsi and stuffing it
inside the skull of a rat together with twelve small pieces of
wood, to represent arrows, tied round it. This is then to be
taken out and buried in the ground at the junction of two paths.

The following additional information was added for the
benefit of Chano's child. 755

The child should not go to any house where people are quar- 751
relling, and should particularly avoid places where corpses 784
are being burnt: nor should she mix with people of low cast, [564]
such as Blacksmiths or Musicians! For the next few months
she should also attend no wedding. She will be troubled
by Mutnyam Chen, a demon which causes shooting pains, [776]
shortness of breath, and pains in the heart. The left shoulder
will be particularly painful. She should not be present at
the time cattle or bows and arrows are purchased; nor should
she eat the flesh of any diseased animal. It would be better
also not to allow her to play with knives. The reading of the
following books will undoubtedly be beneficial: *Numchiya; Tukzung; Chozum; Numsa Numget; Chunjet*, and any others
available.

The *Chenmo* ceremony also appears to be indicated, for [782]
which a bundle composed of a monkey's head, dog's head, 751
and a piece of iron is necessary. The child will always be 755
in some danger of dying, and the same may be said of its
mother! At the present moment demons and gods are
quarrelling amongst themselves for mastery of the child's
body; and if the demons win she will surely die. For this
reason good treatment is essential, or the child may suffer
unnecessarily. If she lives until after November she will in

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* The reading of books is very commonly prescribed, especially in Tibet. In order to get through the several bulky volumes within a reasonable time it is usual to call in a number of Lamas, each of whom reads aloud, but all at the same time, a different book or chapter for the benefit of the person concerned. This idea might well be incorporated into Western medicine: an order to read, for instance, the whole of *Chambers's Encyclopædia* might have a most salutary effect; provided, of course, that the patient did not hire others to do it for him!

751 755 If she lives until after November she will in future be lucky, especially should she engage in any form of [777] trade. She will always have plenty to eat and drink and her later life will be "like a flower." It is clear, however, that some childless woman is covetous of her mother. At the present time she is listless; always in a hurry, and seems perhaps to pay no attention to her parents. This is because a demon has taken charge of her soul.

It is possible that the child may dream of corpses: also she may excrete and vomit blood, in which case she may have no desire for food. This, however, will be averted provided the treatment is carefully followed. The child will in any case suffer from coughs and colds during the next few months; but for this nothing can be done. They will not be dangerous.

793 Tafoor's fee for the consultation, at which the patient was [466] not present, amounted to two rupees. The ceremonies, however, were much more expensive, but had not been completed by the time I left Lingtem.

793. We have already seen that in Sikkim the Lama functions 754 both as priest and doctor; but there is another side to his activities which may definitely be classified as magic or sorcery. This part of his work may best be considered under three separate headings: the causing of death, and sending of devils to cause harm; love magic; and finally, charms and spells.

754 The ability to cause the death of others is not apparently confined to Lamas and is occasionally carried out by laymen. The outward and visible sign of the ceremony consists in burning butter and incense over which copper has been scraped. A chicken must also be sacrificed and its blood offered to the demons. It is believed that by this means the selected demon gets a full stomach and will then do what is asked of it. It seemed so easy and simple a rite that I asked Tafoor if I could not do it myself; but "No," he said; "you have not been long in this country and the Mungs do not yet know who you are!"

Tafoor says that he has personally never sent a demon to

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The Mun Gongyop making an offering. He is assisted by his wife, who squats on the right. The object in the saucepan is a bamboo strainer, out of which she is ladling *chi* to refill the cup which Gongyop is holding.

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Tafoor "prescribing" for Chano's wife. Chano, on the left, appears to be somewhat doubtful of the issue; or perhaps he is wondering whether he can afford the necessary "treatment."

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A *Mung-Li*, or demon's house, on the edge of a cardamom field.

[facing p. 146]

754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this
[782] sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832. When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf
793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
832 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced 751
to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of 777
universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series [531]
of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-[illegible]talled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The e[illegible]acy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

751 The *Za-Sung* is a strip of paper wrapped round a piece of
777 bamboo and covered with a coating of lac, on which are impressed nine zeros representing eyes. This charm is usually worn on a string round the neck.

[415] The *Tshon-Sung*, or "weapon-warder," is always worn in a *Ka-Wo*, or metal charm box. This is usually of plain silver or copper, but is sometimes decorated with gold filigree work.
[523] In this box are usually kept the most precious relics and religious heirlooms of the family. These usually consist of such things as the hairs of some holy Lama, his bones, teeth, or a portion of his clothing. Nail-parings also are in much demand. These things are considered so efficacious in affording protection against weapons that Tibetans and Bhutanese are often willing to pay very high prices for them, and will not part with them for any consideration unless they believe that they are haunted or have become attended by some evil spirit which is likely to cause their owner sickness.

The *Palkyet-Sung*, or amulet of universal purpose, is considered to be particularly efficacious in averting the evil influences of physical mesmerism, disagreement between married couples, and in maintaining harmony between them.

823 Gold and platinum are believed to be proof against all
783 forms of pollution, but it is not often that such expensive materials can be afforded. Copper comes next in order of merit, and is preferred to silver as being less liable to pollution. Silver boxes must be sanctified by sprinkling holy water over them every morning and fumigating them with incense; but this is unnecessary with boxes of any other metal.

844 For cases of childbirth, and also for various diseases of the
751 nervous system, there are charms written on a thin strip of paper with Chinese ink. These are rolled into a pill, coated with butter, and given to the patient to swallow. In cases of difficult labour they are tied to the hair of the mother, on the crown of her head, in the belief that this expedites delivery of

the child. Throughout Nepal used railway tickets are 844
nowadays much used for the same purpose; but this particular 751
charm does not appear yet to have reached Sikkim.

Amongst Lepchas, Limboos, and Sherpas, as well as 751
Tibetans, strings of snail-shells are worn on the necks and 855
wrists of children, and are sometimes fastened to their clothes. These are places for the soul to hide in, should the child be attacked by an evil spirit. They are often worn up to the age of seven or eight, after which the soul is considered capable of looking after itself.

The following natural objects are considered to have 778
magical qualities, and for this reason are often made up into charms. The use of some of them probably originated in Nepal; but, like most of the other charms and amulets from that country, they are highly prized by Lepchas.

Black cats' placenta; tigers' whiskers, preferably obtained while the animal is not quite dead; tigers' claws and collar-bones; armadillo scales; the horn or hoof of rhinoceros; the milk of a tigress; the placenta of elephants and rhinoceros; bears' claws; wolves' tongues; musk; bears' gall-bladders; and finally, various plants and herbs, particularly if they have been blessed and consecrated at auspicious moments by strolling Lamas.

These things are worn mostly by women and children, and are thought to ward off the evil eye and the effects of sorcery. They are particularly efficacious in guarding against the evil desires of envious neighbours; but are also considered effective in counteracting any possible harm which might result from a stranger looking on at the time of eating.

The products of the rhinoceros are, of course, in great 825
demand all over India. They are believed by Hindus, for 171
instance, to have a purifying effect, and make offerings of water acceptable to the spirits of ancestors. Their use is restricted to the higher castes, and only those who take no alcohol may use them. Hindus of lower caste may make use of rhinoceros horn in their worship; but in this case are

825 171 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

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796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

The place selected for the ceremony was in a small 796 clearing below the monastery. It was at the junction of several paths; and was adorned with two long walls of inscribed stones and a number of prayer-flags raised on bamboo poles. From this vantage point one had an uninterrupted view in two directions: of Kinchinjunga to the west, and of the Tibetan peaks to the east. Early in the morning two rough field altars had been prepared, one facing towards Kinchinjunga, the other looking down the valley. On the latter altar offerings would be placed to the "demons of the plains," such as send in disease and pestilence from the outside world.

In a situation such as Lingtem it is natural that Kinchin- 823 junga, or Konchen as he is locally called, should be more 782 venerated than in places where the mountain is not visible. Perhaps because of this its worship forms an integral part of nearly every local ceremony, as in the present case; this, of course, is in addition to the religious celebrations in the mountain's honour which are held in the monastery on the fifteenth of every month, this day being sacred to the god.

"The mountain Kanchinjunga [*sic*], on the western border 823 of Tibet," notes Waddell, "is known to most visitors to Darjeeling and northern Bengal. This graceful mountain, second in height only to Everest,* was formerly in itself an object of worship, as it towers high above every other object in the country, and is the first to receive the rays of the rising sun and the last to part with the sunset. Kinchinjunga literally means 'the five repositories or ledges of the great snows' and is physically descriptive of its five peaks, the name having been given by the adjoining Tibetans of Tsang, who also worshipped the mountain. But the Sikkim saint, Lha-tsun Ch'embo, gave the name a mythological meaning,

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* This was correct when Waddell wrote in 1894. Since then, however, Kinchinjunga (28,148 feet) has had to yield its place to K.2 (Mount Godwin Austen: 28,250 feet) in the Karakoram. It is now the third highest mountain in the world. The error has not, however, been noted in the 1934 edition of Waddell's book.

823 and the mountain was made to become merely the habitation of the god of that name and the five 'repositories' became real store-houses of the god's treasure. The peak which is most conspicuously gilded by the rising sun is the treasury of gold; the peak which remains in cold grey shade is the silver treasury, and the other peaks are the stores of gems and grain and holy books. This idea of treasure naturally led to the god being physically represented somewhat after the style of 'the god of wealth.' He is of a red colour, clad in armour, and carries a banner of victory, and is mounted on a white lion. He is on the whole a good-natured god, but rather impassive, and is therefore less worshipped than the more actively malignant deities."

796 778 The altar for Konchen was properly finished, and constructed from freshly cut branches of trees. That facing down the valley, however, was only very roughly constructed and consisted of little more than a few ferns on top of a beaten-down bush. These two altars were later to contain the sacrifices offered by the Mun, whose part in the ceremony it will be convenient to describe first.

796 When we arrived Gongyop was busy preparing an object known as *Rum*. This was a circular basket, filled with earth, about one foot in diameter, with ferns placed round its edges. While he was making this, others were constructing *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks. These are bamboo sticks about two feet long with the tops frayed out to look like flowers, and were later decorated with petunias, everlasting flowers, and red roses from the monastery garden. These *Mung Patoong*, eight in number, were now stuck into the back of the *Rum* in the form of a semicircle. In front of them was a similar row of slightly shorter hollow bamboo sticks, called *Tek*. In front of these again was another semicircle, also eight in number, of even smaller pieces of bamboo called *Tur*. All of these were roughly decorated with incisions cut with a knife. Later on the eight *Tek* were filled with water and the *Tur* with milk.

The *Rum* was now placed in position on the altar looking

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Lamas preparing the *Yay* to be used in the *Cherim* ceremony.

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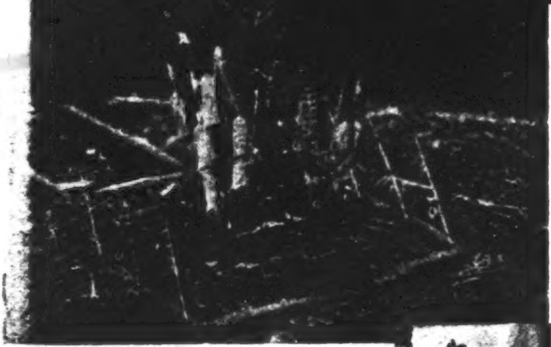
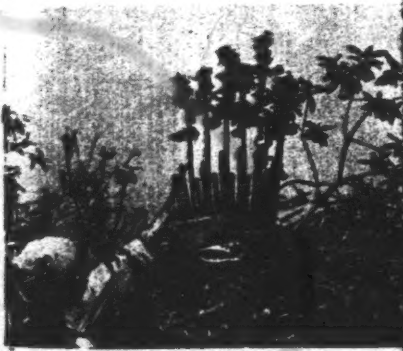


The *Gedo*, complete except for its "trimmings" of grain and leaves.

The completed *Gedo*, with the tall *Yay* in position. The offering is about to be carried away in procession. →



The *Rumi* in position, showing the line of *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks.

[Facing p.154]

796 down the valley, and Gongyop came and squatted in front of it, prior to placing the remaining objects in position. Of these the most important were eight eggs, which had been 796 801 previously inspected by the Mandal to see that they were fresh. Should bad eggs be offered it would mean that some one would fall ill. A heap of parched rice was now placed in the centre of the basket, this having been contributed by the whole village, each householder bringing a small quantity done up in banana leaves. Eight stones were now picked up from the path and placed in position. Scraps of fish, miscellaneous birds' flesh, sticks of ginger, and rice followed. There were also eight slender branches of wormwood, with all but the leaves at the top removed. Gongyop now constructed eight small cups from the folded leaves of banana. He placed these round the front edge of the basket and then attached strings of red, white and blue cotton to the eight sprigs of wormwood. Having done this the *Rum* was sprinkled with holy water: the offering was now ready.

796 Gongyop now began to chant very quietly and quickly, at the same time taking up one of the eggs and pressing it hard against his forehead. He continued thus for about a minute, after which he got up and replaced the egg on the *Rum*. He did this several times; and then took another series of red, white, and blue strings, which he draped across the basket. He now filled one of the small cups with water and green tea-leaves, locally grown. When only three eggs remained he put some grain in a small leaf cup, scattered some of it over the offering and replaced the remaining eggs. After this a helper came and filled the lamps with butter. Three hollowed-out banana stems, each about six inches long, were now brought, on each of which was a small heap of smouldering ash. These three heaps are known, respectively, as *Songsur*, *Kasur*, and *Chasur*. On *Songsur* was put a little juniper, together with some ghee; on *Kasur*, grain and ghee; and on *Chasur*, green [373] tea-leaves and ghee. Now the lamps were lighted; and since there was a slight wind blowing a protector of banana leaf was placed over each one to prevent it being extinguished.

796 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without
[781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop
[787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there
[824 were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used
386] for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now
[415] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required:
[801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a 796 winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had [241] been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the [582] second Dorje-Lopŏn. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the [824 ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the 821] clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At [412] the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal's blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in front of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards the mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which it was taken away and divided up among all present by the Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child was
[865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helper, in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 It was now about two o'clock; but since early morning
778 several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation of a large nine-decker *Deu*. The Deu is an elaborate form of *Yay*, and its function is the same as that already described for the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece of bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated with white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamented
[776] with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as a house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the many special devils of illness. It was not completed until about four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed yet another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time a sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bamboos and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was placed in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattered over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough of millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of the dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tiger, which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeballs made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bamboo sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen base. A female figure was now made of dough and placed astride the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in small stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, which streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many small dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round the central figure, each being stamped with a design which was a replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the servants of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now added

several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those 796
described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the 778
form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were
laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few [517]
roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje- 796
Lopõn, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had [533]
been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning sing-song voice.

796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them,[1] and banged
[201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of
the various parts of the service. There was another small
table in front of the Dorje-Lopōn and on this was placed his
bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and
sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi*
in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time
he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the
liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common
Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After
perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their
ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the
spectators were paying little attention; those who were still
sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[788 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
779] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas
referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed.
The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the
Dorje-Lopōn stood up and called upon the gods and demons
to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many
people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the
cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they
did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;

[1] [i.e. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tapoor.--Analyst]

it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw any- 796
thing approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was 781
not marked.

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the 796
spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance
of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar
and several men started to move off down the path, carrying
the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the
Dos would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and
removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who
walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the
monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away
and then came to a standstill. Chötembu's tipsy wife
tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance.
Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and [533
implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was 781]
almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet.
After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on
by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a
station bell.

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should
by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there
abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dispensation
was obtained and it was taken only as far as the
nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water
at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow.
After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined
daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic
or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a
sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the [787]
ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by
the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in
position until destroyed by wind and rain.

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number 796
than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was 571
told that this was on account of there being no reading of the
sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be

796 present. Every household was, however, represented, and the
571 communal nature of the ceremony was further emphasised
by the numerous offerings of grain which, together with the cost of the sacrificial goat, had been contributed by everyone in the village.

PART FOUR

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FAMILY LIFE

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CHAPTER 8

HOUSES AND HOUSE-BUILDING

342 THE ordinary Lepcha house is extremely simple and generally contains but two rooms, one of which is used as a kitchen. In appearance it does not differ, except in size, from the monastery, which I take to be the prototype of Sikkim domestic architecture.

174 It seems likely that in Tibet the original monasteries also 346 served as forts, as is often still the case. In view of the unsettled state of that country there was need for the people to keep close together; so that instead of living in scattered houses they all lived together inside the forts. As conditions became more peaceful the need to live in close proximity to others became gradually less urgent, but when the people came to build their own houses it was natural that they should take the local fort or monastery as their model, since they had none other. I am not suggesting that this also happened in Sikkim; and the transition in Tibet had probably taken place long before the Lepchas took to living in permanent houses. Sikkim, however, has always been in 177 close cultural contact with Tibet; and in no way is the 341 influence of the latter country more marked than in the local style of architecture. The extremely wet climate of Sikkim has of course made certain modifications necessary. Of these the most striking is the wide overhanging roof, which often projects as much as fifteen feet in front of the walls. It is one of the most pleasing features of all Sikkim houses, and has the additional advantage of keeping the walls completely dry throughout the rainy season.

In Tibet, monasteries, and in fact most houses, are usually built with very thick walls: they are sometimes as much as ten feet thick at the base. It is improbable that such thickness

341 was ever necessary for purposes of defence; but in a country as dry and cold as Tibet, where internal heating is still unknown, they serve the purpose of keeping the occupants of houses warm. This feature, although quite unnecessary in the warmer climate of Sikkim, has been retained in most of the public buildings, but in private houses has given way to walls of bamboo lath and mud plaster, which give all the protection required.

342 The ordinary Lepcha cottage is generally raised about six
feet above ground, and is supported by wooden pillars
[417 resting on stones. It is entered by means of a ladder, which
231] usually takes the form of a roughly notched bamboo, the
space beneath the house being occupied by the cattle.

The building of houses, like every other Lepcha activity, is hedged around with rules and restrictions. Not all of these are always regarded; but to pretend a complete indifference would be to lay oneself open to the machinations of the ubiquitous evil spirits.

When a man wishes to build a new house he first takes a
[787] little earth from the proposed site and gives it to a Lama, who
will then divine whether the place is suitable or not. This he
342 does, not by means of meditation, or any other form of
779 concentration, but by referring to a book called *Sachet Zai
Patar*. There was only one copy in Lingtem and its owner,
when reading it out to us, was honest enough to own that
although he had studied the book for years he still found
some of the instructions quite incomprehensible. Here is the
gist of them:

Jampay Yung, Kongshi Gyabo, Hishay Tugyel, and Shinji Tulgay Gyabo once gathered together in Gyakar, which, so the Hlaribu said, is probably Budh Gaya but may be Benares! But in any case, in Gyakar there are seven burning ghats. These four gods consulted together and they came to the conclusion that since men were building houses all over the place, and without any regard to the suitability of the sites, it was incumbent upon them to formulate some instructions.

It is very important that the site of a house be selected with 342
care, because on this depends the luck of the family: some 361
sites, for instance, will ensure large families, others none at 777
all. A site which has a small meadow in front and a hill behind, something like an Alp, is very good, as the hill behind may be used as a retreat. It is good if such a hill has a stream on either side; and there should also be trees all round. The site should slope gradually from back to front: it should be level on the west; and an outcrop of rocks on the east is good. It is particularly lucky if there is a waterfall directly in front. Roads leading to the site from the east and north are good; but those from west and south are bad, since devils come from these directions. There should be no trees on either side of the house, but only below. I pointed out to the Hlaribu that this last condition was almost impossible in a thickly forested place like Lingtem; but he only smiled and went on reading. If there is a large tree below, and immediately opposite the centre of the house, care must be taken that in no circumstances is it ever cut down; but a large tree similarly placed above and behind the house must always be felled. If it is too big for this it will suffice if a piece of iron, an old knife for instance, is stuck into it and left. If the earth on which the house is built is very soft this is a sure indication that the owner's wife will not live long; but it appears that a site cannot be selected with this end in view! It is bad if there are no hills between the north and east, because these give shelter from fierce winter winds. The door of a house should always face "the coming up of the sun"; but when I asked why the house adjacent to the monastery had its door facing west the Hlaribu would only say that "it does not really matter, but is better if it faces east."

It is not a good thing to build a house immediately beneath a pass; or on a site with a landslip below it. This is
not for the more obvious reasons that will immediately occur [778]
to the reader, but because such spots are the favourite resting-places of devils. It is unlucky for those born in "snake" or "horse" years if there is a reddish cliff or hill

342 behind the house; but for those born in "chicken"
361 "monkey" years a white cliff to the west of the site is go
777 If, by any chance, a person of "snake" or "horse" year finds
that he has inherited a house with a reddish cliff behind he
[783] need not refuse to occupy it. It will be perfectly all right if he gets a Lama to prepare nine pots of water, into each of which he must put, respectively, a few scrapings of gold, silver, turquoise, iron, and various other metals. These pots must be wrapped in red, blue, and yellow cloth, tied up with black thread, and built into a prayer-wall either by the owner of the house or someone specially deputed by him. It is considered bad to have water below the house which reflects the glare of the sun; but if this is unavoidable, then gold, silver, and copper must be thrown into the pool concerned. It is not good if water seeps up through the ground immediately below the site; but apparently of no consequence if this should happen above. Nor is it good if there is a cave between west and north, as this would undoubtedly house a *Mamu* devil. A house should never be built immediately opposite the entrance to a valley, nor opposite any sort of crack or cleft. This would be most unlucky and would cause a rift in the family occupying the house. Unless absolutely unavoidable, a site should not be selected that lies between two hills, since this would certainly cause the owner of the house to be attacked by special devils which would cause him to commit various offences against the Sikkim state!

[312] The quality of the land surrounding the site is of no importance; nor is the proximity of drinking water. It is nice to have friends and relations fairly near; but these are minor considerations and of no importance in the first instance. In a country which has some of the finest scenery in the world it appears odd to us that the view is never considered. Some houses have, indeed, an unparalleled view of the mountains; but when the sites were selected this was a matter that never even entered the builders' heads.

If a householder wishes to put up chortens or prayer-walls,

these should never be placed to the east of the house or the 342
occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed 361
to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the 777
north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the [354
grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should 352]
add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too 342
greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts,
must be built with at least two posts; and in no circum- [361]
stances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

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342 used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western
pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up
with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma*
from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in
L turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each
[335 pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*"
[465] Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs
of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the
owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the
kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old
man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is
considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with
a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through
the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go
out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be
noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is
technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two
gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the
distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run
round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends
N being carried some distance inside the gables, which are
L otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open
342 gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to
164 carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however,
when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter
the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the
Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most
other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The
Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

L
N
and it is worth noting that their houses contain no such 342
ventilation. They are, moreover, in the habit of stopping up [164]
every crevice and crack with rags or paper, and in addition
sleep with their heads completely covered, neither of which
does the Lepcha do. The Lepcha house, moreover, has a
wooden floor, through the joints of which, since the house is
raised off the ground, air can also enter. The Nepali house,
on the contrary, is built flush with the ground and has a floor
of rammed earth smeared over with a mixture of mud and
cow-dung; this last for ceremonial cleanliness.

24th March:

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We went this morning to watch a house being re-roofed. 356
It belonged to Pemba, Pichi's Lama brother. When we 476
arrived at about nine o'clock some twenty men, including a
number of Lamas, were already putting on new rafters.
Only two women were present: Pemba's wife and mother;
but others will turn up later, to help in the actual thatching. L
No payment is made to the helpers; but in addition to being [465]
fed while they are working they are given a feast on the
conclusion of the work.

L
Women started to arrive about ten o'clock, and at once [356]
started to light fires and prepare the gargantuan meal which 521
seems to be the usual complement of such occasions. Everyone 831 [273]
appeared to be completely sober (an unusual state of affairs); 522
but as soon as the women arrived sex was, as usual, the chief topic of conversation. Whenever a woman came anywhere near she would invariably be greeted with some obscene remark, at which all the others would laugh. The greatest joke seemed to be to induce the girls to go up on to the roof, so that men working below could pass personal remarks on such parts of their anatomy as were visible. I must say, however, that the girls seemed ready to play. At one time Pemba's mother, a most efficient and able woman, told the workers to press the thatch well down. "You come up here and we'll press things down all right," somebody shouted. This remark, to which she took not the slightest exception,

521 522 831 was greeted with much giggling laughter, which seems to be reserved exclusively for this type of joke.

356 I was told that there was no one in charge of the work, and certainly did not hear anyone giving any sort of order. In spite of this, however, there was no fuss or bother; everyone seemed to know exactly what to do.

314 356 655 The material for roofing this house had been gradually collected during the past three months. We noticed one old man sitting apart, about a hundred yards away up the hill. He was preparing the canes for making the ties. We wondered why he was all alone. "So as not to attract the notice of any government official who might pass this way," he said. This appeared a most unlikely contingency, unless he thought we were spies; but since cane is a forest product, and therefore the property of the State, it should not rightfully be used without permission. This prohibition also applies of
313 course to firewood; but in that case appears to be disregarded.

342 313 The thatch, by means of two overlaps, is of three thicknesses. It is not fixed to the rafters but is roughly kept in place with a long stick tied right across it. It is made from a special kind of bamboo only found high up in the forest. This is cut into four-feet lengths, split, soaked in water, and bent double while still green. It is placed on the roof with the inner surface outside, so that the rain is carried off the roof by what is, to all intents and purposes, a series of open bamboo drains.

356 As soon as the rafters and cross-pieces had been prepared the women joined in the work, the heavy bundles of thatch being first carried up to the attic by men. Pemba's father took no part and spent most of his time repairing a hedge round the house, in which he was assisted by his youngest son. The whole roof had been stripped off before we arrived; but one small corner had been left, as protection in case the new roof was not completed by nightfall.

778 I noticed that a bullock's horn had been fastened over the door. This is known as *Gusung*, and is meant to frighten devils. There is no ceremony in connection with its use; but

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Typical Lepcha homestead.

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Sowing dry rice.

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Re-thatching a house.

[facing p. 172]

778 it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such
things up. None of the things had been removed from the
356 335 house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a
new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be
completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction
of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where
necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery
are constructed entirely without nails.

* * * * *

352 There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables
(except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown.
354 The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which
some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the
415 cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and
323 I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was
251 told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang
from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked
353 against the walls. The family bedding may generally be
seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and
unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers
inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that
the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One
such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*,
one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but
how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension.
Our own cast-off papers were always in much
demand, one man in particular asking constantly for
[721] pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine
experience, and talked of little else, although of course he
had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no
longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace
while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope
sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

[312] Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in
251 copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts.
415 These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

415 also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to
766 pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone
415 burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made
[439] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen. On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and
[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, 291
fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round
the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the
left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left
bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but
before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to
form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried:
this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama [773]
he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum*
is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar
woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people
wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the
commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the
small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped
with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*,
with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to [855]
the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of
brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless
one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made
of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the
waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment,
so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bareheaded;
and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not 515
apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people
themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though
fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather,"
notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these
people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution."
It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised,
for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death ceremonies [765]
are completed the relatives wear only their oldest
clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would
take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in 351
which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and 244

[244]

351 crops of which only small quantities are required at a time
[514 are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence
364] much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform
241 the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

CHAPTER 9

Agriculture and Kindred Subjects

THE main crops in Lingtem are rice (grown both 243
"dry" and "wet," the latter in terraced fields),
millet, buckwheat, maize, and barley. The method
of growing rice under water in terraced fields, which the
Nepali has brought to a fine art, was apparently only [177]
introduced into Lingtem some twenty years ago, although
Hooker mentions it as being commonly employed in other
parts of Sikkim, which he visited as long ago as 1848.

Most Lepchas seem to think that rice grown in terraces is
somewhat sweeter to the taste; but that rice grown dry is
more nourishing. To me, and I imagine to most Europeans,
one kind of rice tastes much the same as another: but people
who have made this crop their staple diet are as critical of the
various brands as a sunbaked colonel is of his port. But
whether dry rice is actually more nourishing is at least open
to doubt: what, however, is certain is that the construction of
terraces for growing rice under water entails very considerable labour; and I imagine that the Lepcha's natural [157]
indolence has led him to prefer the dry variety.

Such terraced fields as there were in Lingtem were badly
kept and inefficiently constructed. It would be perfectly
easy, as my Nepali servant constantly pointed out, to
increase the yield considerably. The point is, however, that
the present arrangement gives the Lepcha all he wants to eat.
Beyond this he is not interested, for the idea of personal [556]
wealth is here not greatly esteemed. From one point of view 243
this is, of course, a most desirable state of affairs. I fear, 157
however, that in the case of the Lepchas it comes more from
his indolent habits that from any innate socialist feeling,
although this is not entirely absent. There is no doubt, to

243 my mind, that Nepali settlers would increase the yield of this
157 extremely fertile land threefold; but they would do it to their own individual advantage. But if the Nepali, why not the Lepcha? The Lingtem people were always complaining that they could not afford an iron roof for the monastery. I should personally regret to see the present thatch removed; but that is for purely æsthetic reasons. A roof of corrugated iron would doubtless be more efficient, and if the people really want one, to say nothing of schools and other desiderata, it would be perfectly possible for them, by means of better agricultural methods, to raise the necessary funds. As at present constituted they have in their social structure all the makings of the perfect socialist state; but they have, of course, no leaders. What they require is a missionary; a non-religious missionary, that is; someone of the type that has obtained such remarkable results amongst the one-time ignorant peasants of Russia.

65 Jongu is now protected for the Lepchas and is to all intents
000 and purposes an ethnological museum. Since it is a museum it may just as well be a good one; and the improvement of the people's condition, in which I would include sufficient education to free them from the thraldom of gods and demons, would form an unique opportunity for some educated Lepcha. There are many such in the Kalimpong district, where education has been long available; but removed from their natural environment Lepchas are forced to suppress their more altruistic characteristics in the general struggle for existence. In a district which cannot absorb even a fraction of its educated population this state of affairs is inevitable; at any rate until such time as manual work is no longer considered to be unsuited to the dignity of the so-called educated classes. In the meantime here is a chance for some public-spirited Lepcha; someone who still has some regard for the better qualities of the tribe to which he belongs. If the Jongu people remain as at present their total extinction as a separate tribe is only a matter of a few more generations. This, in view of their many admirable qualities,

would be a pity; but no one can wish to see them preserved 000
as mere "museum specimens," which is what they are at present. After this short digression on possible improvements let us now return to the subject of agriculture.

Rice terraces are used every year; but it is usual to plant a 243
different one of the six or seven varieties in use each year, as [243]
this is considered to be less exhausting to the ground. Dal, or pulse, which is the almost invariable accompaniment to cooked rice in the greater part of India, cannot here be grown on account of the coldness of the climate. The Mandal thinks that compared with "dry" cultivation the terraces give a slightly higher yield per acre: moreover, once made they are easier to work and less liable to damage by cattle. They can also be ploughed; whereas all other cultivation, except the few more level fields around the house, has to be laboriously prepared by hand. For this purpose a large hoe, with its blade turned at right angles to the handle, is the only tool in use, as is also the case in most parts of Nepal which I have visited. Not every man possesses a [426]
plough; but it is always possible to borrow a neighbour's, giving one's labour in payment when required.

Most of the crops in Lingtem are grown in fields which are 242
used only once in every eight years, after which they are allowed to revert to forest. This system is very common in Assam, where it resulted in the complete deforestation of large areas before it could be controlled. In Lingtem, however, it is at least not harmful; for owing to the abundant rainfall the forest grows again in the course of four or five years. This is not to say, however, that more productive use could not be made of the land.

5th April:

We heard that Jiroong was sowing his dry rice this 243
morning and accordingly went to investigate. This involved 602
a steep climb for some five or six hundred feet above the monastery. In addition to Jiroong and his wife (plus the babies, who were left to play), there were present also

243 Tobgay (his adopted son) and wife, his brother-in-law
602 (Tempa), and one or two others, all relations of one sort or another. Working in an adjacent patch of forest was an old woman, her adopted son and his wife. The ground was being prepared by means of billhooks, but hoes were also in use. As soon as the undergrowth has been cut away the jungle is burnt and the ground lightly scratched, but not properly turned over. The larger trees are left standing; but the branches are lopped and only the leaves at the top of the tree are left. This is to ensure that they grow again next year, when the land reverts to forest. The ground was the steepest
311 I have ever seen used for cultivation: in some places it was so steep that it was difficult to stand. Here and there long lengths of wood had been laid along the ground and held in position with pegs: this in an attempt to sheer up the hillside in the steepest places. At the lowest level of the field millet had already been planted: to-day rice was being sown in the central portion, and to-morrow they will plant the top section with maize. Once the planting of a field with rice is commenced it must be finished the same day, or the demons will cause it harm. The rice planted to-day will be reaped in September, when this field will then be used for buckwheat. This will be ready in December, after which this particular land will lie fallow for another eight years.

243 Jiroong says that the group of people who own adjacent
571 pieces of forest always arrange to cultivate them in the same year; that is to say, the people who are working the fields on either side of Jiroong to-day will be beside him again next year, but in a different part of the forest.

476 Boundaries between fields are roughly marked with stones;
423 but in actual practice an area of this sort is worked as though
243 it was one large field. When people help each other in the fields they do not receive any payment, but are given food during the day. But all help is, of course, reciprocal.

243 The method of sowing was as follows: One person moved slowly along with a stick in each hand. With these two sticks he made a hole a few inches deep into which a second person,

who was following behind, dropped the seed. Several grains 243
were dropped into each hole and no attempt was made to cover them up with earth. I suggested that this was somewhat wasteful, and pointed to the crows waiting anxiously on the edge of the field. "But if the seeds are covered with earth," said Tempa, "they will come up much too thickly: as it is, the birds will eat half, and the result will be just about right." Apparently there will be some sort of ceremony in Jiroong's house this evening: this to ensure that the birds do not eat too much!

I noticed that amongst the seed for planting were three potatoes. These were also to be planted in the field for the purpose of providing seed for next year's crop. I suggested [244
that so few a number would be lost sight of in so large a field. 242]
Jiroong agreed: he usually planted them in the field outside his house, but was trying them here to see what happened. There is no ceremony in connection with planting the first seed; nor does it matter whether men or women do the planting. To-day the actual planting was being done by women; but this was of no significance.

Once planted, these forest fields are left to fend for themselves, and are apparently not often weeded. The people realise the importance of manuring; but this is not possible in [242]
the case of the more distant fields. The forest itself is potentially valuable, but is not at present worked except to provide for such timber as is required for local construction. But in any case the cost of transportation would be prohibitive in the present circumstances.

Later same day:

Rain made it impossible for Jiroong to finish his rice- 243
planting to-day; but even so, the ceremony in honour of 781
Mayel Rum, which should rightly not be done until the planting is finished, was carried out this evening. We were told "*Kyet manin*"—"it doesn't really matter!"—an expression one hears more constantly than any other. The planting will be completed to-morrow.

243 A small domestic ceremony, such as we witnessed this evening, is performed after any planting of crops; but the most important one is that carried out when all planting for the year is over. This is known as *Ŝunkyo Fut*, as is the ceremony performed at harvest time, when *chi* and various sorts of grain are offered to the gods, as in our own Harvest Festival. If necessary the three ceremonies may be telescoped into one; in which case the time selected is the rice harvest, since this is, in any case, the most important ceremony.

Most of the people we had seen working in the fields were present in Jiroong's house this evening. The ceremony was performed by a Mun, but this is not essential: the householder can do it just as well. We sat about a bit before anything happened and were given the usual *chi* to drink. Later on, a brass plate was put down in front of the Mun, in the centre of which was a small wooden drinking-cup, decorated as usual with a smear of butter round its rim and containing the special ceremonial mixture of *chi* and various grains. On the old man's left was a bowl of incense, of
[314] juniper, I think. The Mun exhorted the gods to give a good harvest, and urged them to cause no damage by rain or hail. Later, he called on the insects and birds and implored them to do no damage. From time to time, in the course of his exhortations, he took a little of the *chi* up in a piece of banana leaf and sprinkled it on the floor. When the ceremony was over this leaf was handed to another old man, who took it and threw it away outside. At the same time Jiroong's wife came and removed the tray, and as she did so she finished off the remains of the ceremonial *chi*. While the ceremony was
78 still in progress old Pong-ring wanted to go outside. He is old
888 and feeble and nearly blind. A small boy at once got up and,
857 without being told, helped the old man out, and later brought him in again.

243 As soon as the Mun had finished the ceremony Jiroong
533 sang what sounded like a hymn, after which his sister gave us another. These songs are always sung on these occasions and are invocations to the gods to look after the crops.

When Jiroong carries out the ceremony at harvest time 243
he must call in the same men who have celebrated to-day; 777
otherwise it means bad luck. The actual harvest ceremony is best done before the reaping commences; but may, if necessary, be postponed. The eldest male living in each house must be the first to taste the new crops. He also offers a small portion to the gods. Should he be absent from home at the time of the harvest a little of the crops first reaped must be put aside pending his return. The seed for the next year's planting is generally selected by the senior woman of the house; but this is not essential and apparently has no significance, although it looks as though it may have originated in some sort of fertility rite. The woman who sings at the time of the planting ceremony (in this particular case Jiroong's sister) must also reap the first three handfuls of rice at harvest time: but, as usual—*Kyet manin!* The singing is done to please the gods.

At the time of the rice harvest, usually some time in early 243
September (the actual day is co-ordinated throughout the 535
district), everyone goes to the fields to dance. I was not 786
present at this time of the year but arranged for a demonstration of the dances, the purpose of which is to separate the straw from the grain. There were about eight different changes of step, mostly various combinations of hopping and jumping, alternating with much stamping of feet. They are "physical jerks" more than dances, and are carried out with great vigour. A lady missionary told me on no account to miss this dancing, since it was "a very pretty and charming rite": what she omitted to tell me, however (and presumably did not know), was that the celebrations are carried on into the night. Anyone who takes part in the dancing must spend the whole of that night in the fields; and on this occasion what is sometimes referred to as "the greatest licence" prevails, the ordinary rules of conduct being completely disregarded. No reason could be given for this orgy; but it is, of course, a well-known fertility rite in many parts of the world.

241 The following calendar shows the arrangement of agricultural work throughout the year. It starts with February, which is the first month of the Tibetan year:

February:	Clear ground and sow buckwheat in the lower parts of the valley.
March:	Clear ground and sow dry rice, millet, and a little maize.
April:	Clear ground in the higher places and sow more dry rice, millet, barley and wheat; the last two being sown together as a mixed crop.
May:	Reap buckwheat, and sow more millet and maize.
June:	Plant rice terraces. Weed dry rice. This is the worst month for food shortage.
July:	Sow more millet and also buckwheat. General weeding.
August:	Reap the first rice terraces, and prepare drying sheds for cardamoms. Sow more buckwheat.
September:	Reap dry rice and cardamoms. This is done mostly by the men, as it is heavy work. At the same time the women reap the millet.
October:	Sow barley and wheat, also onions. Continue reaping the cardamom crop.
November:	Clear ground for buckwheat. Make arrangements to sell the cardamom harvest.
December:	Continue to dispose of cardamoms. Women start to prepare the ground for buckwheat. This is the slackest month of the year.
January:	Sow buckwheat.

* * * * *

585 Most marriages take place in October, November, and
December, as during these three months money and plenty of
005 food are available, and work is light. House-building and

House-building and general repairs are also carried out at these times.[1] 342
Cardamoms are perennial and are planted in March and 356
April, being grown from cuttings. The plants bear in the 249
third year, and are at their best in the fourth, fifth, and sixth
years, after which they are rooted up. If raised from seed the
plants take from seven to eight years to mature. The fields
have to be constantly weeded, especially at flowering time,
since the flowers are close to the ground. When the cardamoms
are gathered the flowered stem is removed, but the
leaves are left intact.

I do not know when cardamoms were introduced into Sikkim, but Hooker, a most observant traveller, and a botanist moreover, makes no mention of them. Their cultivation, however, is now of great economic importance all over the State; but this aspect of the subject will be dealt with later.

It is believed in Jongu that cardamoms were introduced [177]
from Nepal, although I understand that the plant is not
cultivated in that country; and certainly I have never seen it
in such parts of Eastern Nepal as I have visited.

Menstruating women may not go near the cardamom 841
plants, especially when they are in flower; nor should anyone 784
who has used strong-smelling soap approach them, for this is 249
offensive to the flowers. For the same reason the cardamom
fields should never be used as latrines. It may be noted that
all over Nepal menstruation is intimately connected with
certain kinds of cultivation. A woman in this state may not, [244]
for instance, approach pumpkins, chillies, cucumbers, or egg-plants,
or they will rot away: if they have only reached the
flowering stage they will not set. It is thought that the smell
of menstrual blood causes the damage, and that no harm will
ensue if the woman thoroughly washes her body before going
near the plants. Apart from this no one should point a [244]
finger at ripening pumpkins or cucumbers: nor should one
talk loudly in their presence, or they will certainly rot away.

All these ideas are known to the people of Lingtem, and 249
may possibly have been introduced by Tempa, who lived 177

[1] [i.e., during Oct., Nov. and Dec.--Analyst]

249 amongst Nepalis for years. They are not, however, regarded,
177 except in the case of cardamoms; and only then "because a wandering mendicant brought the first plants from Nepal, and these instructions were given with them."

249 Every cardamom field has a small erection in one corner.
778 It is called *Mung Li* (Devil's house), and looks like a square beehive on legs. It is made for the accommodation of a devil called Thyok Dum, whose chief joy appears to be the destruction of cardamom plants. If given a house, however, he causes no damage.

Rice, *chi*, maize, meat and fish, together with a few coins, are placed in the house twice each year; just before the rice and barley harvests. These offerings remain in position until changed. Anyone who can read, but not a Lama, may place the offering in position; and with the exception of this particular person, no one should approach nearer than several yards to the *Mung Li* or he will be taken seriously ill. These erections are found only in cardamom fields; other crops being considered to have no need of such protection.

* * * * *

249 It is believed that agriculture in general was introduced
773 into Lingtem by the mythical inhabitants of Mayel, a place on the slopes of Kinchinjunga which it is no longer possible to reach. There are in Mayel seven men and seven women, who live in seven houses. They are children at dawn and old people at night; but they never grow older in years. They have, moreover, the peculiar property of being invisible, except during the first few hours of each day. They would seem also to have solved the problem of birth control, for no babies have ever been born in Mayel.

It is said in Lingtem that the people of Mayel built the Maharaja's original palace in Fyung-Di, the walls of which are still standing. When they had completed the work they started to return, going by way of the Teesta and Talung valleys, and were followed by the progenitors of the Lepcha tribe. The whole party went along quite happily until they

came to a place called Sakyong Pantong, where the Mayel 773
people disappeared into the forest. By diligent searching, however, the Lepchas discovered their tracks. They followed the signs as far as Lungzong Chachyo(?) and then completely lost them, after which they returned and settled in Jonga.

They used to wear clothes made from nettles and hats of plaited cane, like those once worn by the Lepchas. They cultivated rice; also pumpkins, chillies, maize, and manioc, which they used to take and sell in the market at Zikchu Thum, a place in Tibet, and somewhere between Chumbi and Lhasa. They did not wish to be recognised; and it was for this reason that they went so far to dispose of their products. But during this time the Maharaja had been forced to remove his court to Chumbi (see Chapter 3) and his servants were in the habit of going to Zikchu on market days. Being for the most part Lepchas they, of course, recognised the Mayel people. They told the Maharaja what they had seen; but since the court shortly returned to Sikkim there was no opportunity to see them again; but it is believed they no longer leave Mayel.

Myths of this sort are, of course, constantly being reinterpreted; and of this particular one there are endless variations. Here is the version given by Jiroong:

"It is three days' journey from Lingtem to Mayel, which 773
was once visited by my great-grandfather. He was out 539
hunting at the time and came to a place where there were many big trees and a stream. He noticed a piece of wood floating on the water. It was moving slowly along and he decided to follow it. He came eventually to a narrow path, so narrow as to be like a knife-blade, where he saw some feathers lying on the ground. They belonged to a Mayel bird, which is the mother of all migratory birds that come to Jongu. He followed this path for three more days and came eventually to a village, where there were seven big and well-built houses. This was the village of Mayel; but at the time he did not know it. He went to the first house and asked for

773 539 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days; and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers, and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think may partly be attributed their superior physique compared, for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts of British India.

243 439 [435] Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalimpong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out, is probably not unconnected with the different living conditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as the people get in their own natural conditions, would undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

But the settled areas of British India have an expensive 651
British administration, for which, in the last instance, the peasant has to pay. This is not to deny, of course, that he gets certain benefits in return: good roads, schools, hospitals, and so on; but these are of more use to people who have already reached the higher economic levels. In the meantime the small tenant cultivator is forced to sell his own rice in order to pay his taxes, not to mention expensive litigation, which seems to increase steadily as conditions become ever more "settled." It seems all wrong to me.

* * * * *

Both men and women work in the fields, and there is no 462
hard-and-fast division of labour between the sexes, although 562
the heavier work is done mostly by men. Woman, as such, is an inferior being, but only because the Lamaist doctrine says so. "Even Buddhist nuns, excepting the very few so-called incarnations of celestial Bodhisats, are given an inferior position scarcely higher than lay devotees"; and to be born as a woman is a definite step backwards in the march towards Nirvana, the freedom from reincarnation, which is the goal of all true Buddhists. But this idea is completely foreign to the Lepcha, who does not recognise any inherent distinction between the temperament of the sexes; there is with them practically no such thing as "men's work" and "women's work."

Dr. Margaret Mead was the first to point out that the 000
personalities of the two sexes are socially produced. Two of the tribes she studied in New Guinea had "no idea that men and women are different in temperament. They allow them different economic and religious rôles, different skills, different vulnerabilities to evil, magic and supernatural influences. The Arapesh believe that painting in colour is appropriate only to men, and the Mundugumor consider fishing an essentially feminine task. But any idea that temperamental traits of the order of dominance, bravery, aggressiveness, objectivity, malleability are inalienably

00c associated with one sex (as opposed to the other) is entirely lacking. This may seem strange to a civilisation which in its sociology, its medicine, its slang, its poetry, and its obscenity accepts the socially defined differences between the sexes as having an innate basis in temperament and explains any deviation from the socially determined rôle as abnormality of native endowment or early maturation. . . .

"The knowledge that the personalities of the two sexes are socially produced is congenial to every programme that looks forward to a planned order of society. It is a two-edged sword that can be used to hew a more flexible, more varied society than the human race has ever built, or merely to cut a narrow path down which one sex or both sexes will be forced to march, regimented, looking neither to the right nor to the left. It makes possible a Fascist programme of education in which women are forced back into a mould that modern Europe had fatuously believed to be broken for ever. It makes possible a Communist programme in which the two sexes are treated as nearly alike as their different physiological functions permit." (*Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, 1935.)

562 Everything we saw in Jongu bears ample witness to the correctness of her views; and such differences as there are between the sexes are undoubtedly culturally conditioned, no inherent variation in temperament between them being recognised. This will perhaps be more apparent when we come to the subject of marriage.

462 Although we did not collect actual statistics, it is my impression that the Lepcha woman does considerably more physical work than the man. In addition to working all day in the fields, she has to cook, tend the children, and keep the house in order, and is often out searching for fuel: but the man is not above nursing the baby or cooking his meal when necessary. But since so many of the men are Lamas, and in consequence required to spend a great deal of time in the performance of their useless duties, the bulk of the work falls to the women. This is not, however, to relegate them to the

This is not, however, to relegate them to the
position of domestic slaves; and while the laws of the state do 462
not permit a woman to inherit land, she can, and does, own [425
other property, and is an equal partner with her husband in 421
the management of the household affairs. 562]

In addition to the cereal food they raise, all the Jongu 231
Lepchas keep pigs and cattle, which they slaughter from time 232
to time. No attempt is made to breed from the best stock; 838
nor is a bull ever taken to a cow, who "chooses her own husband," as Tafoor naïvely put it. All pigs are castrated when they are three months old, as they are considered to get savage after this age. Incidentally, it may be noted that the eating of uncastrated pig's flesh is believed to cause a man to become homosexual, a perversion which is practically unknown amongst Lepchas and regarded with disgust. There was only one known case in Lingtem, both parties being now old men with grown-up families. There is, as a matter of fact, no word in the Lepcha language for homosexuality, a man who practises it being called merely "one who has eaten uncastrated pig." This prohibition does not apply to women, and is ineffective outside the Lepcha tribe, Tibetans and
Nepalese, for instance, being unaffected if they eat this flesh. [262]
Nor does it apply to the eating of wild boars, a particular delicacy which the Lepcha does not often obtain.

All domestic animals are regularly fed, and during 231
monastery festivals I several times noticed men and women take a few scraps and give them to the stray dogs which hung
around the place. The house-dog is kindly treated and, like [552]
all the other domestic animals, given a name. Pigs, chickens, and dogs are generally given the dregs of the fermented millet after it has been used for making *chi*, as a result of which the former are said sometimes to become inebriated, but I must confess that I have not myself seen a drunken pig. They also feed on human excrement, and may often be seen following people out to the fields for this purpose.

Sheep are not kept in Jongu, as the climate is thought to be too hot; but actually the dense forest would make grazing difficult. Nor does one ever see a horse or a mule, two

231 animals that in adjacent Tibet are universally employed for
transport. Such loads as have to be transported are carried
entirely by men. For this purpose they do not, however,
[482] often use the head-strap, the commonest method throughout
the Eastern Himalayas, but carry their loads by means of
a strap round their shoulders. It usually takes the form of
a length of creeper, torn from a tree at the time.

* * * * *

[793] Lamas may not take any form of life, and men should not
231 eat the flesh of animals killed by women; but apart from
857 this there are no restrictions in the slaughtering of domestic
animals. There is no ceremony when a child kills its first animal. A boy generally starts to kill chickens when he is about ten; goats and pigs four or five years later. It is thought, however, that a youth should not attempt to slaughter oxen before he is about twenty, and not before he is capable of copulating with a woman. "If he is unable to copulate," said Karma, "he would not dare to kill an ox; he would not be nearly strong enough, and it might easily turn on him. If, however, he is able to copulate then he is strong enough to be able to look after himself." I should add, however, that this is merely a manner of speaking, and that there is no significant connection between the two acts.

* * * * *

136 The dense forests of Jongu are well stocked with deer
224 (mostly the so-called Barking Deer—*Stylocerus ratna*) and
pheasants, so that by means of hunting the people are able to vary and supplement their ordinary diet.

224 A boy usually starts to hunt at about the age of fifteen,
868 and for the first few times he will go out unarmed with some
experienced man. Later on he will make or acquire a bow and arrows of his own; and if he cannot make them himself he will get someone else to give them to him. He will never, however, ask his own father for a bow and arrows, unless he too happens to be a hunter, because "hunting is merely

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields." [868]

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will [826] find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is [753] thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason [776] he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched [782] rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
[834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from
the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears
caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there
is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common
in many parts of the world. In this particular case the connection
[832] may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gallbladders
are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but
[757] they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
[844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They
are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet,
which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
[435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about
five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered
to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other
most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human
consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally
clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other
vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself;
it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough,
and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart
from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and
no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he
saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in
reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left
the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking
on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when
the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said;
"and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth.
From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all
kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
[184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating
snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago,
and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

the annual sacrifice to Pong Rum, even though he hunts no 224 more. To neglect this duty would be to run the risk of being haunted by the god, who might cause one to drown oneself in the river. Karma no longer hunts, but when he gave it up he forgot all about the annual ceremony. One night, however, Pong Rum came and threw stones at an orange tree outside his house. It was a misty half-moonlight night and he could not see very clearly; but he could hear the stones come whizzing through the air. He went outside, lighted some incense, and put a little butter beside it. "Forgive me," he said to the Rum; "for I will hunt no more." He then went inside and lay down, thinking the god was satisfied.

About a month after this he was sitting quietly drinking one night when his dog suddenly started to bark. He went outside to investigate, but could see nothing; it was a wild, dark night. He went indoors again, but after a little while the dog again started to bark and then whined in a most peculiar way: Karma thought that perhaps someone had hit it. He went outside again; but again there was nothing to see. He walked all round the house, and then he suddenly noticed that his dog was lying dead; there were no marks on its body. It was the Pong Rum come again. Karma now does the annual ceremony regularly, and has not since been troubled.

Here is another hunting story. Some three generations 224 539 ago there was once a Mandal and his friend. The Mandal's family guardian was a male god, that of his friend a female. The Mandal was exceedingly fond of hunting, but he never had any luck, whereas the other man never came home with an empty bag. The Mandal persuaded his friend to change gods with him, as he thought this might change his luck; to this his friend agreed. They sacrificed an ox, and placed it with some *chi*, butter, and grain. Then they each took their drinking bowls, smeared some butter round the rim, and made a libation to their respective gods, saying at the same time, "May my Rum be yours and yours mine." They did

224 this three times, very solemnly and in the form of an oath.
539 After this the Mandal's luck changed, but the other man never again killed an animal. This is a true story.

224 Before a hunter can make sacrifices to Pong Rum he must
869 first learn how. He takes a present of *chi* and rice to some experienced hunter and asks to be instructed: but he must take care that no woman knows what he is doing. The teacher will then make an offering to the god, at the same time telling it that in future the boy will make the sacrifice himself, and that he should therefore be pleased to accept it. The young hunter now sits with his back to the teacher, who goes through the sacrificial formula phrase by phrase. He does this very slowly, so that the boy may commit the words to memory. By sitting with his back to the teacher his mind is not distracted and he is thus able to concentrate better. As soon as he can repeat the words correctly he may make the sacrifice himself; but the next time he kills an animal he will do the sacrifice in the presence of his teacher. If he makes a mistake the teacher taps him gently on the shoulder, but he makes no comment. That particular sacrifice, however, is ineffective, and the boy must come again. He does this until he is word-perfect, but need take no further presents to his teacher.

411 The bow is the weapon most commonly used in Jongu,
824 both for hunting and for killing domestic cattle. It is made of bamboo and strung with toughened fibre made from the young shoots of a special kind of tree-fern. Arrows are made from the stems of the *Parong* (*Deeringia celosiodes*) and tipped with kites' feathers. The arrow-head, which is detachable and usually remains in the kill, is made from *Payung* wood (*Actinodaphne Sikkimensis*) and is smeared with aconite; but
439 metal arrow-heads, imported from Gangtok, are nowa-
177 days replacing the home-made wooden variety. Domestic cattle are killed with unpoisoned arrows, fired at the heart from a distance of only a yard or two. The arrow-holder is merely a length of hollow bamboo fitted with a cap, and is slung over the shoulder with a length of cane. Cane,

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shredded and twisted into a thread, is also used for all the 824
bindings.

The bow is grasped with the thumb, second, third, and 411
fourth fingers of the left hand, the first finger remaining
straight out and pointing in the direction of the mark. The
arrow rests against the left side of the belly of the bow and
is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand,
which grasp it over the string. The bow is held in a vertical
position and the arrow is drawn back until its head is about
two inches in front of the belly. This is for shooting at
normal ranges; but if it is wished to increase the distance
the arrow can be drawn back behind the belly, in which
case the whole bow is pointed slightly upwards in order to
give the arrow a higher trajectory. In order to tighten the
bow-string it is merely undone and given a few twists. Some
people wear a protector bracelet of bullock's horn on the
left wrist, but this is not really essential.

In addition to the ordinary bow used for hunting there
is also a small pellet bow, with which mud pellets, about
the size of a marble, are used. It is used principally to kill
small birds and also to scare them away from the crops, and
is really little more than boys' plaything.

The only tool in use is the *ban*, a very slightly curved knife 412
about fourteen inches in length. It looks something like a
rather clumsy and heavy carving knife, but with a rounded
end instead of a point. It is used for everything, from making
bows and arrows to the construction of a house; and while
in European hands it appears to be a clumsy weapon, Lepchas
are able to use it successfully for the very finest work. No
Lepcha, not even a Lama, is ever without his *ban*, which is
worn in a bamboo half-sheath and suspended over one
shoulder by a length of cane. They are far more skilful in
its use than the Gurkha is with his *khukri*, another general
utility weapon, which incidentally is never used as a
boomerang, as some of the tall stories current during the
war years would lead one to suppose. There are no black- 326
smiths among the Lepchas, and *ban* blades are imported 439

326 from Mangen or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
439 wooden-handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
435 rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo
as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few
seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a
pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line.
Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest
and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden
plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon
he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and
prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of
which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a
bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted
usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a
deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long
since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
554 but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the
village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised
man.

CHAPTER 10

CHILDREN

LEPCHAS are patrilineal and, in common with most 611 of the people of India who trace descent from the 596 father, live under what is known as the joint-family system. Under this system the family remains more or less intact, since it is only the girls who leave their parental home [591] on marriage. There are occasions, of course, when brothers decide to separate, but, generally speaking, the land remains undivided and is worked by the members of the family as a whole.

"A child born into a community divided into clans," OBT notes Rivers,* "becomes a member of a domestic group other than the family in the strict sense; and this is reflected in the terms of kinship that he addresses to those around him. The system of relationship found in these circumstances is called classificatory because whole groups of relatives are classed with the father, mother, brother, sister, and so forth, and receive the same terms of address. That is to say, relatives are grouped in classes. Thus, a person will give to a large number of men the term which he applies to his own father; to a large class of women he gives the same name as that he uses for his mother; and this applies even to the relationship of husband and wife. Thus, the distinctions of uncle, aunt, and cousin that play so fundamental a part in our system of relationship are largely obliterated in communities with moieties and clans."

The Lepchas use a very simple form of classificatory 601 relationship, in which, however, the biological father and mother are clearly distinguished. It would be of no interest to the general reader to burden this account with a list of the words in use to denote the various relationships; but one

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* *Social Organization.* W. H. R. Rivers. London, 1926.

60 curious anomaly may be noted. There is only one word to denote both son and daughter; and similarly one word has to do duty for both one's younger (but not elder) brother and sister. When it is required to distinguish the sex of these individuals it is necessary to add the prefix denoting, respectively, male or female. In actual practice this is rarely necessary, except when talking to strangers, who might be expected not to know the composition of any particular family.

In a small community such as Lingtem nearly everybody is able to trace some sort of relationship to everyone else. This is particularly easy, for instance, when a man refers to a person whom we should describe doubtfully as a "cousin several times removed" as his brother. It is, however, extremely confusing to a stranger of an alien culture; but in view of the fact that pedigrees are common property and that there are no skeletons in the Lepcha's cupboards, no such difficulty arises amongst the people themselves. Until one gets used to the system one naturally thinks of two "brothers," for instance, as being sons of the same father. It is, of course, quite possible that they may be; but on the other hand it is equally possible that one is the son of a man whose mother is descended from the other's great-grandmother's sister! But all these details are common property in the village and no confusion arises. To explain them here would need a whole series of complicated charts, the sight of which would undoubtedly cause the reader to lay down this book in disgust. That, however, is a risk I am not willing to take: but in any case, such things are of interest only to experts; and even they, to judge by the uncut pages in the books of some of my friends, are sometimes human!

852 We may now consider the subject of Lepcha home life in general. It will be convenient to start with babies and children, in reading the account of which due allowance should be made for my bachelor prejudice and ignorance!

Three days after a child is born its head is smeared with a mixture of butter and soot, the latter scraped from the family cooking pot. This is believed to hasten the closing

of the fontanel, and remains on the baby's head until it 852
wears away. At the same time snail-shells, as already
described, are tied round its neck and wrists and sometimes
fastened to its clothing.

There is also a ceremony on the third day after birth,
which is called *Pa-Gong Chi-tong*, the latter part of which
word means merely *chi*-drinking—an indispensable part of [273]
all Lepcha ceremonies.

Very early in the morning, before any of the guests arrive, [824
the floor is swept with wormwood and a little incense is 356]
burned. At the same time a Mun will come and wave
offerings over the mother, should she have required his (or
her) services on account of a difficult delivery; but if the
birth was normal this office is omitted. The Mun takes a
previously boiled chicken, divides it, and sets it on a tray,
together with parched rice, ginger, and some pieces of wild
birds' flesh. There is also the usual buttered cup for libations
of *chi*, and the whole is offered to the god of birth. In the
meantime most of the guests will have arrived, and the
offering is now divided amongst them.

If the child is a boy, and particularly in the case of a first-
born, an ox, pig, or goat will be sacrificed. In the case of a [562]
girl an animal is not generally slaughtered; but if the family 852
is well-off it is usual to buy some meat and give each of the 574
guests a piece, for true Lepcha hospitality demands that no
guest should leave without a present of some sort. Whenever
we went to a Lepcha house we were invariably given some-
thing to take away. On the occasion of big ceremonies it
was usually a portion of the sacrificial meat; but even when
we went on an ordinary friendly visit we were always given
eggs, milk, or grain.

In the case of a boy each guest brings one rupee and a 852
ceremonial scarf of butter muslin; but for a girl the usual 431
present is six annas or a chicken. The scarf is not given
for girls.

Only very rich people will go to the expense of sacrificing 852
an animal for a baby girl, and when the Mun offers it to 556
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852 556 the birth-god he will entreat it to send a boy next time. 562 He will concentrate on this matter throughout the third 824 night. He takes three tufts of elephant grass tied up with coloured thread, and attaches them to ordinary finger-rings. He then waves this bunch of grass slowly over the parents of the newly-born child, and afterwards over all present.

852 Now in Azoom Aru Purtam, a place through which all 562 babies must pass before being born, there is a waterfall 773 called *Lung Fing* and a well called *Rungzel Oonglop*. The waterfall is a boy and the well is a girl. When he concentrates on the matter the Mun is able to visit this place in spirit, when he persuades the god to make the waterfall and the well change places.

The coloured threads with which the elephant grass is tied are offered to the spirit of the waterfall, after which the grass is put in a pot of water and kept on the household altar. A chicken is now offered to Nazong Nyu, the progenitor of the human race, after which the two rings are given to the child's mother to wear. The performance of this ceremony, for which there does not appear to be any specific name, will assure that the next child born is a boy.

852 If a Lama is present on the third day he will work out the 787 child's horoscope and give it a name; otherwise the child's 553 father will go to his house. It may be noted, however, that the names given by Lamas are never used and in many cases are forgotten. Someone present will usually give the child a nickname, which will be selected in accordance with its appearance. Common names of this sort are "the fair one"; "the dark one," and so on; but the most extraordinary one I ever came across was *Kalok Tikung*, which being translated comes to mean "The rat's grandfather." Children are 551 generally called by these nicknames; but otherwise the custom of teknonymy is usual. An adult may occasionally be called by his name, but it is not considered polite to do so; and in no circumstances may a Lama's real name be mentioned. There does not appear to be any objection to

mentioning the names of the dead; nor does a woman mind 551
giving the name of her husband; but she will, of course, say only the nickname.

While someone is selecting a nickname for the baby, one 852
of its aunts (it makes no difference which) ties red and white 553
threads round its wrists. All this time the baby will be lying in its mother's lap in the kitchen, and it is never taken near the Mun who is doing the ceremony. It must be kept awake, however, and as soon as the ceremony is over will sleep soundly. But before this its mother will feed it with a little butter, to which she may add the merest trace of powdered rice. On this occasion a necklace will usually be put round the baby's neck by its mother, but this is removed as soon as the ceremony is over and not put on again until such time as the child can crawl; otherwise it is thought that the baby will not take the breast properly.

With the exception of people actually living in the house 846
no one may see a newly-born baby until the morning of the third day after its birth. People do not make any remark on first beholding the child; nor are they expected to congratulate its parents. There is, however, no harm in remarking upon its likeness to either of its parents. The usual insincere platitudes such as are commonly uttered by us on these occasions are, however, not expected, and it is considered perfectly polite to behold the infant in stony silence. It seems to me an excellent custom.

A mother does not usually leave the house for the three days following the birth of her child, but after this she may, if strong enough, start going out again. She usually resumes her ordinary housework on the fourth day and the heavier field work on the seventh. For some weeks after the birth the mother is given extra food, which usually takes the form of chicken soup. This in itself sounds a very little thing; 846
but to anyone who has been accustomed to dealing with 562
the more primitive Hindu peoples of India (and perhaps also the Mohammedans, but I have no experience of them) it is a refreshing change to find a mother treated with

846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth
has recently taken place to wash themselves and their
clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards
in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to
wash every three days for the first month following the child's
birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night
and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783] a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
[514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial
uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have
they the common obsession with defecation, which leads
Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body
is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually
wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself
will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be
in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance,
it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in
red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such

time as he unlocks it again. This applies even to his own 843
house-door, which he may close but not fasten. He must not tie up any article of clothing in such a way that it forms a bag; and if the string by which his ordinary bag is suspended from his shoulder happens to break he must on no account pick it up; he may, however, recover any grain that spills out. He must not eat animals which have met their death by accident, or which have been killed by some beast of prey; nor should he look upon recently killed animals of any kind. There is no objection to his killing animals; but if he does so he must run away at once and let others deal with the carcass. He must not eat birds caught in a trap; nor touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle (this is somewhat unexpected in a completely horseless community), or both the mother and child will certainly die. Should he by any chance inadvertently touch a bridle during the period of his wife's pregnancy the resulting evil may be averted by keeping a bridle in the house and having it waved over his wife at the actual time of delivery.

If he is making a bamboo mat, for instance, he must be careful not to finish it off completely; he should always leave a little piece at the end undone, and this applies to any other similar kind of work. There is no objection to either of the parents eating fruit which grows on trees or bushes; but the
woman must be careful not to eat a double banana or her [826]
child will be born with webbed toes. Similarly, should she eat a double head of millet it would cause the child to be born with extra fingers.

A man must also take care not to blow up a bladder, such as is used for storing grain, during the pregnancy period.
If he happened to do this in the fifth month, for instance, it [753]
would mean that the baby would die when it was five months old: if in the seventh month, then when it reached the age of seven months, and so on, until the actual day of birth. The actual death would be caused by a swollen stomach, a punishment sent by Gongbo Mung, from which the child would not recover. This particular precaution

843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion,
or the early death of the child, since this would also cause
the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that
if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen
[755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which
is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes
should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones.
Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable
to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would
be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the
large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should
be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this
would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another.
[821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child
will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse
it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child
has recently died, both its house and the paths it was
accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better
to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No
[845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body
during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced
on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any
reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it
is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in
breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag
the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn
top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This
826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with
one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight,
during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical
defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed
to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these
precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which
I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents
from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

child is born; and during this period it is thought that the 843
father's actions can affect the fœtus equally with those of 826
the mother. It is believed that a newly-born child is not in [774]
full possession of its soul until three days after its birth, and for this reason the precautions are observed until this day.

During the time of birth no man is present in the room, 844
and the subject is naturally an impossible one for a male to investigate. Karma said that when he was a boy he was very anxious to see how babies were born, and one day he went unnoticed to a house in order to witness this event. It had only a floor of bamboo slats, so that by standing underneath and looking up he was able to see everything:

"The woman was holding on to a rope, which was suspended from the roof, and was herself being held from behind by another woman. I first saw a large round object appear, which was apparently the baby's head. Every time the mother grunted a little more appeared; but when she ceased to grunt the whole object appeared to contract and disappear. There was complete silence for a bit and then the object seemed to shoot out of the woman's body with great rapidity. I saw that it was the baby.

"I noticed that the woman's vulva was very large and round; but I was not frightened, nor did I feel the least shame. I think I really did not think about the matter at all. I suppose I must have been about eight or nine years of age at the time this happened. I only went because I was very interested to see how a baby was born, and because I wanted to see what a woman's vulva was like. I could not now watch this sort of thing, as it would have too exciting an effect on me."

If the afterbirth does not descend it is usual to sever the child's umbilical cord and tie it to one of the mother's toes. At the same time any Mun who has previously attended her should now come and again wave elephant grass over her. Failure to get rid of the afterbirth is due to the mother having stepped across a ring of straw during pregnancy, an action which is thought to cause the vaginal passage to

844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also 843 likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the 75 ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter.

184 Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the 845
stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an
example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is
done in the hope of stopping lactation.

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up 843
to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with 833
his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, [837]
later on, that certain men other than the husband also have
the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the
husband alone should have relations with his wife once it
is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general
will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in
which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called
Tung Bong Zum (the meaning of which words I have been
unable to discover), which takes place between the husband
and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child.

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains 846
in the stomach during the first few days following their 833
delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been
no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word
which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood
following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this
condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter,
and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour
pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that
the woman will die. But of much more importance in the
cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's
semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the
man enters the woman from behind and is particularly
enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not
care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the
woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position.
Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual
relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow
their husbands to have regular relations with them for
another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have
thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the

846 ritual copulation takes place on the third day after birth,
833 in which case it is known as *Suknong Munlok*, but the pro-
cedure is the same. It is only done when the pain is so severe
that the woman cannot bear to wait until the seventh day.

863 A child is considered to be naughty if it is dirty in the
house after the age of two. When it is about one month old
its parents start to teach it to empty its bowels at regular
interval, and it is taken out to the veranda for this purpose.
856 By the time the baby is three it is able to crawl, after which
it can go to the veranda by itself, or can at least make its
wants known to others. A few children can never be taught
to be clean, and it is thought that such ones are invariably
naughty in later life. No notice is taken of a child which is
dirty inside the house up to the age of three, but after this
age it is slapped on the bottom or thighs by one of its parents
with a brush made from bamboo slivers: it is not punished
in any other way.

868 At about the age of five girls begin to learn women's work
867 and start to carry water and help husk the grain: boys also
are supposed to start learning men's work at the same time;
but nobody seems to worry if they spend the whole day
playing about amongst themselves. At this time all children
are taught that when anyone gives them anything they
should accept it in both hands. There is very little idea of
personal possession and I frequently noticed that whenever
a child was given anything it immediately shared it with
its friends. It is the most pleasing characteristic of Lepcha
children.

868 Boys are usually given a *ban* at about the age of four, and
412 it is a common sight to see a child of this age already using
his knife with considerable skill. Although the knife is almost
as big as the child itself accidents never seem to occur,
possibly because neither the child nor its parents has any
conception of the possibility of danger. Girls are given a
sickle when they are eight. This is the female counterpart of
the *ban*, and is used to cut grass, and as a general-utility tool.
It is worn tucked into the waistband in the small of the back:

2: Morris T-5 (1937) 1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

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[531
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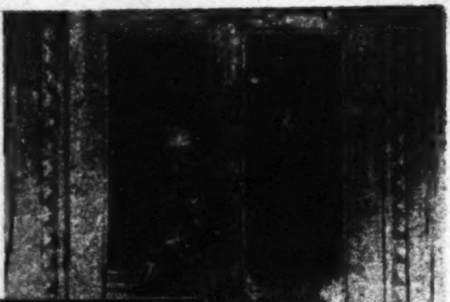

Happy family.

[283]

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

868 its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women
412 which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

845 Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none
777 in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

853 When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even
862 at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals.
858 It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the
[848] case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

853
757 Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its

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Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[301
[137]

[305
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p 211]

853 mother must take care not to go out in the sun, nor should
757 she sit down in any damp place. She should also give up
eating salt and meat for the time being and it is better if
she takes no *chi*. A diet consisting solely of rice and butter
is considered the best at such a time.

856 There is nothing a mother can do to help her baby over
the teething period, but it is considered better at such a time
not to feed the child on frogs' or bears' flesh, or it will not
talk until very late. The teeth should start to appear when
the child is eight months old and should be complete by
the end of the twelfth month; but if the child is seen by a
pregnant woman its teeth will not appear until after that
woman's child is born. For this reason pregnant women
always take care not to look at other people's babies. The
[777 lower teeth of a boy should appear before the upper or the
842] child's luck will not be good: moreover, if the first child is
a boy and its upper teeth appear first it means that the next
child will be a girl. With girls the reverse applies; and in
[787] cases where their upper teeth do not appear first it means
that in later life they will have trouble with domestic animals,
and are likely to lose their husbands soon after marriage.
Nothing can be done in cases of this sort, and parents
generally conceal the fact that their children's teeth have
appeared in the wrong order. It is a bad sign if a child of
either sex has pointed milk-teeth in the lower jaw: this is
a sure sign that the child will be naughty and disobedient.

856 A child is thought to become either "naughty" or "good"
577 at about the age of five or six; but its character is not finally
865 formed until about fifteen, or, in the case of a girl, not until
157 she gives birth to her first child. A "naughty" child is one
who is unfriendly, who hits people, quarrels with its friends
and throws stones at them; but the worst characteristic of
"bad" children is that they will not co-operate with others.
The domineering and strong-willed child with a mind of its
own, which is looked upon with favour in our culture, would
be quite out of place in Lepcha society, and would be
definitely branded as "naughty." This is an excellent

example of the conditioning of social personality. In a 856
culture such as our own, in which "success" can only be 577
obtained at the expense of others, it is obviously desirable 865
to encourage the growing child's more aggressive charac- 157
teristics, at the same time suppressing its gentler traits. In Lepcha society the reverse is the case: the domineering and aggressive type who is unable to co-operate with others is definitely out of place and cannot fit comfortably into the pattern of Lepcha village life. Looked at from our point of view, the Lepcha child is a milk-sop, the very antithesis of the "public-school" type; but the conditioning given the child from its early years produces the type of person that is best able to fit into Lepcha village life as originally constituted. It may not be, and in fact is not, the ideal type if the culture is to survive, for we have already seen that it is only by keeping the Jongu area as a Lepcha reserve that the tribe has escaped complete disintegration, by reason of its contact with the aggressive and materialistic Gurkhas. This is not to say, however, that the type is itself undesirable. It is, as a matter of fact, in many ways admirable; but it cannot survive when surrounded by people of more materialist cultures; and a certain amount of contact with the outside world is inevitable.

Few children are so "bad" that they cannot be improved 865
with training. The ordinary child is naturally "good," and only becomes "bad" when spoilt by its parents, the spoiling taking the form of loving the child too much. If a "bad" child is not trained by the time it is nine or ten it will become uncontrollable, and it is thought that in such cases the only remedy is to send it away from home, preferably to be trained as a Lama. There were three such children in Lingtem; but their parents had regretfully to admit that the training had not improved them! Parents do not seem to co-operate much in the training of their children, and if either scolds the child the other invariably takes its part, so that, in the long run, the child generally gets its own way.

When a baby cries its parents will say, "See this pretty

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may
sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a
phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly
translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but
apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong
to frighten young children.

[856] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four
months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house
the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will:
otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs
straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half
years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the
mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position
on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while
being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise
the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles
are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down
it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but
it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha
child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding
Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha
without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire
as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the
Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children,
whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as
the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk;
and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five
months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak
at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however,
will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji* 856 198
—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children 847 are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result [826] of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human [773] child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, [842 and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would 848] appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of [797] the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor [842] does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when 847 she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will
Say nothing about it.

ow say nothing about it. I have already stated that no stigma
848 attaches to an illegitimate child as such; but when a woman, in the words of one of our interpreters, "goes in for bastarding" it is necessary for the man concerned to perform a ceremony known as *Tip-song*. It should be done as soon as it is known that the girl is pregnant and consists in sacrificing an ox or pig, which, together with an assortment of various kinds of grain, is offered to the birth-god by a Mun. There is also a small Lama ceremony, for which, however, only one small *torma* is needed. For very rich people the ceremony and its attendant festivities may last as long as two whole days, during which time the offerings are consumed by the assembled company.

It sometimes happens that a man refuses to do *Tip-song*, in which case the girl's parents will themselves make arrangements to carry it out; but the man will eventually be made to pay fifteen rupees and a pig. This payment is known as *Soo*, which is the word used also for the special food provided for a woman at the time of her confinement. *Tip-song* is often, but not necessarily, followed by formal betrothal and marriage, but if the man refuses to carry it out he has no claim on the child. Once the Tip-song gifts have been given the man acknowledges the child as his own and is responsible for its upbringing. He has, however, no claim on the mother unless he follows the *Tip-song* up with betrothal and marriage. Karma's mother gave birth to an illegitimate child after the death of her husband. But since the father denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter, the *Tip-song* was provided by her relations.

It should be noted that the purpose of the ceremony and its attendant gifts is not to legitimise the child's position in the community but to avert the damage to the crops of the girl's whole village by hail, which would otherwise ensue.

In cases where a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child by a man who is already married, his wife's consent is first necessary before he can do *Tip-song*. If she refuses her

If she refuses her
consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is 848
closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the 595
case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife.

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is 848
able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view
of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may [842]
even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents.

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go [553]
secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock.

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be
mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family
of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew [753]
of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry.

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

842 born to be a girl, as in this case she can look after subsequent children and relieve her mother. Apart from this, there seems a slight preference for boys; for, in addition to the help they are able to give in the fields, it means that there is someone to look after the parents when they are too old to work for [591] themselves, whereas girls leave home on marriage, except in very rare circumstances.

855 Once a child is big enough to look after itself—that is when [856] it reaches the age of four or five—it is left more or less to its 857 own devices; and unless a boy is to become a Lama he [871] receives no formal training such as is given to the ordinary European child. Nor is a girl taught how to cook, but by watching her mother and doing odd jobs about the house she gradually acquires the necessary skill. Little girls are fond of playing at making toy houses and it is a common sight to see them pretending to cook with leaves and mud, [524] but I never saw a girl playing with a doll and was told that they are unknown.

Small boys seem to spend most of their time wandering about with a pellet-bow; and stilt-walking is a popular [534] amusement. Most boys also play the flute, which is merely a length of thin bamboo with five holes for stops.

593 Most people are of the opinion that the ideal family consists of from three to four girls and from four to five boys. If there are too many boys there will not, unless the family is very rich, be enough to feed them all when they grow up and marry. As a matter of fact, the average family in Lingtem is extremely small, and a number of couples are childless. Since the average number of children does not give an indication of the true state of affairs, I have given the composition of each of the families in Talung in Appendix 1, 593 to which the reader is referred.[1] It will be noted that a very 842 high proportion of the women appear to be sterile, a matter which causes great concern to the people themselves, who realise that their numbers are steadily dwindling, and who desire children above all things. This question of sterility is perhaps the greatest problem with which the Lepchas

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 301--Analyst]

of Jongu have to deal. The reasons for it are not at all 593 842
clear, but are possibly not unconnected with the people's sexual regulations, which will be discussed in detail later.

Nearly every ceremony and invocation ends with a 842
request to be given children, and I well remember the last time we visited the Mandal's house. The ceremony I have already described had just been completed and he was escorting us up the path. We thanked him for his hospitality and told him that now that he had done the ceremony we were sure he would quickly recover his health. He smiled; and then suddenly became very serious. "If you really wish to give me a blessing," he said, "please pray that I may have a son. You could wish me nothing better than this: but I fear this boon will never be granted me."

Sterile couples sometimes make a pilgrimage to a monastery in order to be blessed by three Lamas. This is called *Mun lop-thop*. Many people have done it, but without result, and its efficacy is nowadays somewhat doubted. Better than this is to go to Luksom Partam, a [773]
tarn high up in the mountains, where the first birth of the human race is said to have occurred. On arrival at the place the husband and wife must copulate near the lake and offer a sacrifice on its banks; silver and precious stones should also be cast into the lake, if possible. On return to their home a Lama is called in to read the holy books and to offer grain and butter to the gods. In order to be effective the pilgrimage must be repeated in three successive years; but some people do it year after year in the hope of eventually getting a child. Of almost equal value is a ceremonial visit to the Talung Monastery. This is known as *Shaptok klong*. It consists in taking large quantities [431]
of *chi*, and rice, also the carcass of a pig, and offering them to the Lamas. It is said that the necessary gifts take at least ten men to carry them. On return from Talung the same Lama ceremony is performed as is necessary on return from Luksom Partam.

597 A childless couple nearly always adopt a child, usually that of some near relation. It often happens that a woman gives birth to a child of her own a few years after she and her husband have already adopted one. An adopted son is better than none; but there is no doubt that the practice is to a great extent resorted to in the hope of getting a child of one's own. This belief is so common that even among Lepcha Christians in the Gangtok district (so Miss Scott tells me) it is common for people to adopt a child temporarily, on the understanding that it is returned to its parents as soon as the adopting mother gives birth to a child of her own. In Jongu, however, the adopted child
[428] does not normally return to its own parents and remains the legal heir of its adopting father, even should he later have a son of his own.

883 Of adolescence there is little to be said except that it does
831 not seem to result in psychological disturbance such as is common in our society. But there is, of course, here no
[521] sexual repression at any time of life. Sex is, indeed, almost the people's sole recreation, and the most common topic of conversation on practically every occasion. This state of affairs is more commonly associated with a society such as our own, in which sexual experience is, to a great extent, denied to the young. One would not expect to find it in a primitive culture in which at no time is there the slightest difficulty in indulging in sex to the body's content. It should
[212] be realised, however, that the Lepchas have no mental
535 occupation whatsoever. They do not read; they do not even dance, except on rare ceremonial occasions, and once the day's work in the fields is done there is only drinking and sex. Whether this is or is not a desirable state of affairs I leave it to the reader to judge; but at least the people are free from the evils which undoubtedly result from the unfulfilled desires aroused by the erotic stimulation of the cinema and such-like shows.

582 Marriage usually takes place between the ages of fifteen
584 and twenty, and is generally arranged by the parents of the

boy and girl concerned. The children are, however, consulted 582
and are never forced to marry against their will; but at [584]
this age they do not seem to have any very strong likes or
dislikes, and seem usually willing to marry anyone whom
their parents suggest. I do not think the question of love ever [831]
arises, and am personally doubtful whether such a state of
mind is known to the Lepcha; but the reasons for this will be
more fully discussed in the following chapter. There is a 584
tendency, however, for boys who go away from home to work
to insist on choosing their own partners, and to delay their
marriage until a somewhat later age than the normal. There
are, of course, not many such; but under the feudal system 642
prevailing each village has, according to the size of its 874
population, to provide a boy or two either for service in the
Palace at Gangtok or for training in the State Carpentry
School. These boys are usually away from home between,
roughly, the ages of twelve and twenty, but some prefer to
stay on. They seem to find it a little difficult to fit into the 154
scheme of village life when they first return, but in Lingtem
there was no apparent case of a boy being permanently
maladjusted on this account. They settle down quite
comfortably after the first few months and are probably
better, in the long run, for the additional experience. Most of
them learn to speak Nepali, and one or two can read and [191]
write a little. The system has much to commend it, and 574
enables the Maharaja to keep in personal touch with his
tenants. This would otherwise be impossible, since a personal
visit to Jongu, Lepcha hospitality being what it is, would be
too much of a drain on the district's resources. This His
Highness fully realises, and wisely keeps away.

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PART FIVE

SEX

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CHAPTER 11

Marriage and General Relations between the Sexes

595 CONTRARY to the reports of earlier travellers, the Lepchas (at least in Jongu) do not practise polyandry, except in very rare circumstances. It is true that their customs permit it; but in actual practice two brothers only share a wife when one is continuously away from home. The only known cases have already been noted in the chapter of personal histories. When polyandry does occur it is always, as in Tibet, what is technically known as adelphic polyandry, that is to say the co-husbands are always brothers; and in discussing the subject the idea that a woman could be married to two men who were not themselves brothers (in the full biological sense) appeared never to have entered the people's heads. Whether it would be possible for a woman to marry more than two brothers at a time I do not know, since a case of this sort has not occurred in Jongu. I imagine that [77] polyandry, such as it is in Jongu, has arisen entirely as a result of contact with Tibetans. It appears to be unknown among Lepchas of other districts, and in discussing the subject the Mandal was definitely ashamed to own that it sometimes occurred. "It is not a good thing," he said; "but it is common among Tibetans, and is sometimes a convenience when one brother is more or less permanently away from home. For this reason I have occasionally recommended, as in the case of Pichi and his brother, that a girl should be married to two brothers."

595 837 A distinction must, however, be drawn between marriage and sexual relations: for while it is unusual for a Lepcha girl to be actually married to more than one man, it is common for her occasionally to sleep with all his younger brothers. The important point to note, however, is that she is not married

595 837 to them, whereas in a true polyandrous society each of the men concerned is a legal husband, and takes his place as such at the wedding ceremonies.

835 It will perhaps make the situation clearer if I explain the sexual rights of a Lepcha in tabular form.

A man may sleep with:

1. The wives of all his elder brothers, and their younger sisters, whether married or not.
2. The wives of his father's younger brothers, and their younger sisters.

Bearing this in mind it can be seen that the youngest of seven brothers, for instance, whose father was himself the eldest of seven more brothers would have the legal right to sleep with no less than twelve women; but this is assuming that none of the women concerned had any younger sisters. This is, of course, a purely theoretical example and in actual practice many of the women would not normally be available since their husbands would probably be living in different villages: but even so, it means that many a man has "a home from home," so to speak, in several of the surrounding villages. In the two categories mentioned above the woman concerned cannot refuse the man's advances. He has a legal right to copulate with her, and may, if necessary, force her to submit against her will. But in addition to all these women
837 with whom a man may legally sleep, there is no moral
835 objection to his doing so with any women with whom he can trace a like classificatory relationship. But in this case the matter is entirely dependent upon the woman's willingness to co-operate: she cannot be forced to submit. In actual practice the result of all this is that in a small village there are very few women with whom a man may not amuse himself. This was certainly the case in Lingtem; but there were one or two unfortunate only sons who had, legally at all events, to confine themselves to their own wives. A great many men, however, do also have affairs with other women, of which little notice is taken, even by the husbands concerned: but

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2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[Facing p. 226]

Mikma, in the centre, about to set off for his *Ashyek*, or formal betrothal. The Mandal, his official "go-between," is on the right, and the other men are carrying the special betrothal gifts, among which, on the left, is a pig's carcass.

Mikma, a bridegroom of fourteen.

835 in no case would a man ever have any sexual relations with
837 the wives of his younger brothers, or with a woman of the same clan as himself. This would constitute incest; and while it is practically impossible to investigate the subject, I am inclined to think, by reason of the horror with which it is regarded, that incest does not occur.

587 In addition to the sexual rights which a man has with his
428 elder brothers' wives it is customary for a widow to be inherited by one of the deceased's younger brothers, preferably the next in succession. Should he have no brothers living the widow may pass to a nephew. It makes no difference if the man in question already has a wife of his own: the widow comes to him as an additional wife, but in no case is any marriage ceremony performed, the woman being merely inherited in the same way as any other piece of property. It is not to be supposed, however, that this arrangement is carried out without the consent of both the parties concerned. The woman is at liberty to remarry with whom she wishes; but it should be remembered that the man who would be legally entitled to inherit her (*Oong-op* is the technical term in use) has probably cohabited with her for years, as a result of which the pair are probably on intimate terms, so that the new relationship is merely a public recognition of a long-standing arrangement. Because of this, most widows are perfectly content to remain with one or other of their deceased husband's brothers.

It sometimes happens that a widow is herself perfectly willing to be inherited by a man who does not care for her, or who, for some reason or other, does not want an additional wife. In these circumstances he need not take her into his home, but it is incumbent upon him to find the woman another husband. In a case of this sort the full marriage ceremonies would have to be carried out, and the usual gifts provided, the expense of which would fall, not upon the proposed husband, but upon the man who should by rights have taken the widow into his own home. Should the reverse happen, and the widow be unwilling to go to an

587 *Oong-op* who is prepared to accept her, then the new husband
428 inherits her. Such cases do not often happen; and only then, I think, because, while customary law is quite clear on the point of widow inheritance, there is no means by which it can be enforced. The system of widow inheritance is considered very objectionable by "civilised" Lepchas, and in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts has been completely dropped, even among the non-Christian community; but there is no doubt that it is a satisfactory method of providing for widows in a community which does not permit women to inherit property; and it is certainly less hypocritical than the Hindu system, for instance, in which a widow remains on in the house but does not actually marry any of her deceased husband's brothers. The Lepcha system does at least recognise and regularise the needs of the body; for no one but an ascetic would expect a young (and perhaps attractive) widow to remain chaste for the rest of her life, whatever tribal law had to say on the subject.

It sometimes happens that a widow has no *Oong-op*. Should she be of an age which makes it unlikely that she will procure another husband in the ordinary way, she may go and live with an elder sister, always provided that the latter's husband is willing to receive her. This arrangement, once again, does not call for any very great readjustment; for, as we have already seen, this man too has always had the legal right to copulate with her. But there are always a certain number of middle-aged widowers who find it difficult to persuade a young girl to marry them, human nature being what it is, and so it happens that a widow in these circumstances often marries some older man who has lost his wife and wishes to marry again. The whole system seems admirably constituted so as to provide for everybody. A few actual examples will perhaps help to make the working of it clear:

587 Chano and his elder brother lived together in one house. Both were married; but Chano's wife died childless some years ago. In the meantime Chano had, of course, the right

sleep with his brother's wife whenever he wished. A few
ears ago the elder brother died. His widow and her three
ildren passed to Chano, and he was thus able to continue
s normal life without the expense of remarriage, and with
e minimum of readjustment. The children always referred
Chano as their father and he regarded them as his own.
he relations within this particular family were so normal
d harmonious that it was some considerable time before
e realised that Chano was not actually the father of the
ildren.

Here is an example of a different kind:

Gongyop was already fifty when the husband of his wife's
ounger sister died. There was no one to inherit her; nor
as she particularly attractive, so in the circumstances
ongyop felt obliged to offer her a home. He was a sick man
the time, and possibly found one wife sufficient. This,
owever, was not to the lady's liking; for although she was
ell over forty and had a grown-up son of her own, she did
ot consider this sufficient reason for spending her nights
one. She soon struck up an acquaintance with Zumbu, a
ell-to-do childless widower, who lived in a nearby house.
e in the meantime had been betrothed to a girl some years
ounger than himself. It was a good match for her, since
umbu was a hard worker and owned considerable property:
he would have presided over the affairs of one of the best
ouses in Lingtem, and was accounted lucky. For some
bscure reason, however, she fell in love with Aga, an
nattractive man of thirty-seven, with a wall eye and a
ideous squint. He had, moreover, a pretty wife of his own,
ho had already borne him three children. He refused to
sten to his wife's entreaties and insisted upon bringing
umbu's betrothed to live in the house. He cannot at present
arry her, since the village elders have so far been unable to
rrive at a satisfactory solution of the case. Having been
rmally betrothed to Zumbu she is to all intents and
urposes already his wife; but, as everybody knows, it is easy
take the horse to the water, so to speak, but you cannot

587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open. 626 Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

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428 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with

yatso; but such is not the case. As it happens, everything 587
as turned out for the best, and Rigiya and his wife are living 428
appily together. It should be noted that, technically speak-
ng, he might be said to have married his younger brother's
vife, thus contracting an incestuous alliance. It should be
emembered, however, that the girl was first married to his
lder brother, so that from a legal point of view he is held to
ave married his elder and not his younger brother's wife.

Cheli, aged ten, is the grandson of old Kahlyeu by his
econd wife. His father died when he was a baby, where-
pon his mother remarried almost at once and went to live
n some other village, leaving him to the care of his grand-
ather. Kahlyeu also had a son by his first wife. He too died
young, leaving a son who himself died a few years later,
having married just before. The widow, who is now fourteen,
is the *Oong-op* of Cheli. In case this seems unduly complicated
I should add that Cheli has inherited the widow of his
deceased (classificatory) elder brother, since both are the
grandchildren of the same man. The pair are not at present [582]
living together, since Cheli is not yet old enough to co-
operate. It is thought, however, that in a couple of years'
time he will be able to fulfil his duties as a husband, after
which he will bring the girl to his grandfather's home. In the
meantime she is living with her mother in a distant village
and he goes to spend a few days with her from time to time.
No marriage ceremony will be necessary.

* * * * *

It must be obvious to anyone who has read so far that in a 578
society with the sexual promiscuity permitted by the Lepchas
there can be no room for jealousy, if the people are to live in
harmony. In a recent article in *The New Statesman and Nation*
(June 26th 1937) Dr. Harry Roberts discusses this very
subject:

"So far as people who æsthetically and intellectually 000
matter are concerned," he writes, "the two great causes of
marital failure are boredom and jealousy; and the greatest of

000 these is jealousy. The first thing to determine is the biological status of jealousy. Is it an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy human mind? Or is it the fruit of a convention which can be changed? No change in convention is going to remove the hunger problem, or even the more sublimable sex problem. Does jealousy rank with these? The answer is, yes and no. I believe that nine-tenths of all jealousy manifested by wives and by husbands and by lovers is but a conventional perversion of the instinct of fear; and this fear arises from the taking for granted of the monogamic tradition, as though it were in accordance with instinct and with right. Yet monogamy, except during those short periods of 'being in love,' is, for live people, the merest convention."

Having myself grown up in a culture in which jealousy is closely connected with sex and marriage I found it difficult at first to realise that this feeling is definitely not "an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy mind." And yet there is little doubt that this is the case. It may be argued that the evidence from a single primitive tribe is no evidence at all, but this is tantamount to saying that ethnology has no practical value. It should be remembered, however, that since our own society has grown so complicated it is only in the examination of primitive peoples that we have any suitable laboratory material for the study of these urgent social problems. Most so-called primitive societies live relatively simple and uncomplicated lives; and by confining ourselves to a small and self-contained community it is still possible to watch the behaviour of the individual in the group, and, conversely, to see what reaction the group has on him.

578 It would not be difficult to make out a case proving that
152 jealousy is inherent in any capitalist society. It is true that the Lepchas are a good example of primitive socialism, but we are here not concerned with that side of the question. The point is that these people have realised that in the conditions in which they live sexual jealousy would make life

intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they 578
have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion 152
never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they
have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no
psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it 834
would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is 833
completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this
reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's
sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in
the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate,
whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of
restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry
if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his
wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you
should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about,
and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he
will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder 753
brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache
and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each
Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will
naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can
do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations 751
with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his 753
clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it
will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one
another and in course of time will give up sleeping together.
It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is
to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the
woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother,
to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have 835
relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time,
and while the subject is not generally discussed among
brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if
asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

835 but because the matter is of such ordinary occurrence as not to merit discussion. With regard to affairs outside the immediate family circle slightly more circumspection is necessary; but only then in the case of a young unmarried girl. Tobgay, for instance, was well aware that his wife was carrying on an affair with Dadool, in spite of the fact that the latter already had a wife of his own. In this particular case the affair was being prosecuted actually inside the house, and sometimes in Tobgay's presence; but, as he himself said: "It is not good manners to pay attention to what goes on in the room once the lights have been put out." In any case he was himself in the habit of visiting other girls in the village.

578 I hope that I have now made it clear that among the
152 Lepchas sexual jealousy does not exist. During our stay in Lingtem there was not the slightest sign of a quarrel over a woman, and the people thought it laughable that such a thing could happen. There is, however, another side to the question and, from our point of view, rather an important
000 one. It is this: is it possible for real love to exist in a society which has completely sublimated sexual jealousy? I do not think it is. A distinction must, however, be drawn between "loving" and "being in love." Most people will agree with Dr. Roberts that "all of us who have passed through the first three or four decades of our life must have found by personal experience, first of all, that 'being in love' is the most exalted of human experiences; secondly, that this period of exaltation is limited in time—lasting, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few months, but rarely extending into years. Loving is one thing; 'being in love' is another. The latter is characterised by exclusiveness—exclusive individual devotion, on the one hand, and a desire for exclusive 'possession' on the other; so that it is hardly possible for any but the most complacent to be passionately in love without experiencing many painful pangs of jealousy. It is the essential insecurity of the relation that explains the hunger for the security and permanence which exclusive possession alone seems to promise."

I should say that "being in love" is a state of mind com- 584
pletely unknown to the Lepchas. There was not in Lingtem,
so far as I know, a single instance of a man or woman making
a love-match; nor do I think such a thing possible in a
society completely devoid of jealousy. It is interesting,
however, to note that among Christian Lepchas in Kalim-
pong and Darjeeling real love-matches are very common and
becoming the usual thing among the younger generation:
and we have also seen that there is a tendency among such
"uncivilised" Lepchas as have worked in Gangtok to make at
least some attempt to arrange their own marriages. It should
be remembered, however, that in both these cases the free
sexual life of the "uncivilised" Lepcha is impossible; in the
one case only temporarily, but in the other by reason of a
permanently changed code of morals. Can it be that as a
result of these changed conditions the "inherent" but
previously sublimated jealousy comes to the surface, at the
same time bringing with it the ability to enjoy the "most
exalted of human experiences"? I do not know; but, to me,
it seems not impossible.

In view of the fact that there is no privacy in a Lepcha 864
house, children are early aware of the method of procreation,
and it is a common sight at monastery feasts to see small
children of four or five imitating the act of copulation, and
not infrequently being egged on by their inebriated elders,
who seem to think this an amusing sight. Boys generally 864
commence their sexual life at about the age of twelve, and 833
usually start by being seduced by one of their father's younger
brother's wives, if any such are living in the same house. We
can now realise that the regulation prohibiting a man from
having sexual relations with the wives of his father's *elder*
brothers has a definite purpose, since the father himself is
permitted to sleep with these women. Were the prohibition [835]
not enforced it would be possible for both a father and son to
have sexual relations with the same woman, a state of affairs
that is looked upon with marked disapproval, although it is
not considered to be actually incestuous.

864 In the same way that a boy usually has his first sexual
833 experience with a woman years older than himself, so is a girl
842 generally first seduced by some older man. A number of women told us that they started their sexual life at the age of ten; and in every case they had their first experience with a grown man. The people do not see anything offensive in this; and we were unable to convince them that the custom is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the very high rate of sterility among the Jongu women. Nothing short of a complete examination by a gynæcologist would definitely establish this point; but it is significant that the several sterile women with whom we were on sufficiently intimate terms to discuss the subject all owned to having been initiated into sex at a very early age, and by men years older than themselves.

833 Except when a young boy is seduced by some elder relation a woman never makes the suggestion to copulate, although she may hint indirectly that she is not unwilling to submit. When a youth is interested in any particular girl he will generally have his first encounter with her out in the forest, or in some other secluded spot; but once relations between the two have been established it is usual for him to visit her at home. He will, if necessary, travel several miles in the dead of night for this purpose. The girl will previously explain the topography of the house to her lover and describe to him the exact place where she sleeps, so that when the time comes he may enter the house silently and make straight for her bed. He will usually creep in on all fours, stepping over the other sleeping people carefully, so as not to wake them. Should he be discovered he will at once run out of the house, and will not return that night; but if the pair are not disturbed it will generally be about two in the morning before the boy takes his departure. He will generally not leave his own home until everyone is asleep, so that he can depart unnoticed. Should the parents of the girl get to know what is happening they will not usually be angry or display any other emotion. Tafoor said that he would not mind in the least if he

knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the [827
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but 881]
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Ken fo*, [842]

832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his
wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons
of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become
senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women
842 become very amorous at this time, as a result of which
intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the
menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very
common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the
Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any
other time.

843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath the women's clothing he decided that it would be more convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a result of this arrangement the women started to bleed periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

821 sudden burst of thunder, not an unusual occurrence in
831 Lingtem. This would at first sight appear to have no connection with the subject of sex; but actually it has. It is considered at all times dangerous to laugh when there is thunder about, but this is the story Karma told me:

821 "Once, when I was a small boy, I went on a visit to Gangtok. I had been down to the bazaar and was sitting talking to some Nepalis in the shop of a betel-nut seller. There was a small lizard running up and down the wall at the time and one of the men laughed and spat a jet of red *pan* juice at it. It remained without moving, merely blinking its eyes in the peculiar quick manner that lizards have: it then ate some of the spittle. Immediately after it suddenly grew quite dark and still; and then there was a terrific crash of thunder followed by the most vivid streak of lightning I have ever seen. We were all thrown to the ground, and several of the men were so badly injured that they had to be taken to hospital; but I myself was only a little dazed. There is no doubt that the lizard caused this sudden burst of thunder and called it down on the men as a punishment for laughing at it.

821 "Incidentally, there are certain men who involuntarily
831 cause sudden thunder if anyone laughs on beholding their private parts. There are not many such; and in fact there is no one living in Lingtem at the moment who possesses this peculiar quality.

"I well remember when the present monastery was being built: there was a boy from a neighbouring village who was helping to carry up stones from the river. Babu was his name. The work was very heavy, and since it was a hot and sultry day the men had discarded most of their clothing. On the way up the hill Babu's trousers slipped down, so that his penis was exposed. All the women started to laugh and to make remarks about his person. Almost at once the sky grew dark and then there was a terrific burst of thunder, followed by lightning. Babu ran off towards Jiroong's house, which was nearby. As he did so we saw the lightning appear

to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; 821
but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink 831
away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas: 581

Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and 539
natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many 773
children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

581 you have found them you must make loops with which to
539 catch those birds."

773 Tarbong spent the night with his mother, and early the following morning he set off in search of the thread. At last he found a special kind of bamboo, which his mother had described to him. From this he cut a few branches, shredded them, and twisted them into thread. After this he again returned to his home.

The next morning he took his thread and again went down to Palyung Chu. He climbed up into a tree, fixed the thread-loops, and once more returned to his mother, telling her what he had done. "You must return early to-morrow," she said, "and see how many birds you have caught."

He did as he was told, and when he again reached Palyung Chu he found so many birds caught in his loops that he could only carry them back with difficulty. He reset his traps and set off home again. As soon as he got there he said to his mother: "If these birds are really edible please eat them yourself in return for all the milk I have had from your body: but if they are not fit to eat, then just throw them away." "They are very good to eat," said Itpumu, "and I will gladly eat them in exchange for my milk."

The following morning Tarbong again set off to examine his traps; but when he reached the place imagine his surprise when he found in his loops, not birds but wooden models of the human penis! He was very angry, and taking the objects out of the loops he threw them away, reset the traps, and once more returned to his mother.

Itpumu asked him why he had come back empty-handed. He told her what he had seen, whereupon she said that the following morning he must hide himself carefully in the bushes and watch what happened. She said he was to hide himself so carefully that even the insects and birds could not see him.

When he reached Palyung Chu he found that the same thing had happened again: once more the loops were filled with penises. Again he threw them away, reset the traps, and

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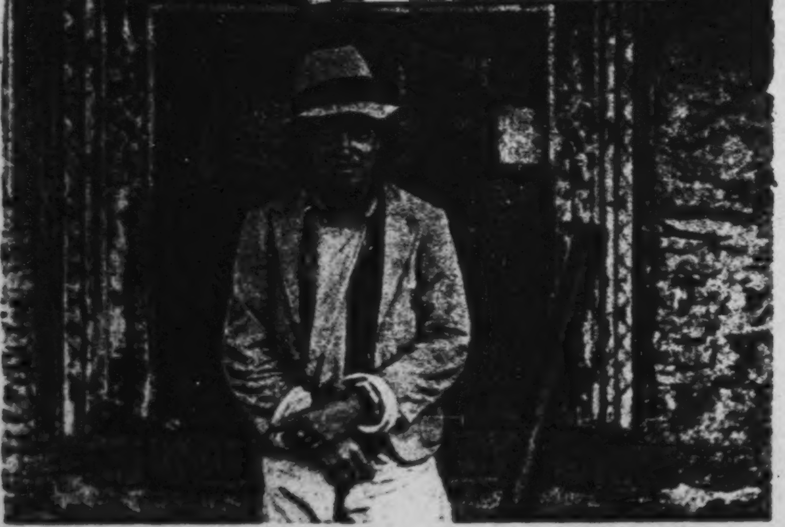

Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]

581 539 773 then hid himself as his mother had ordered him. Presently a very beautiful girl, whose name was Narip Nom, came to the spot. She sat down on the grass and at once began to fashion more wooden penises. As soon as Tarbong realised what she was doing he became very angry and rushed out of his hiding place. He caught hold of the girl, who was in reality his own sister, and immediately tried to ravish her. They struggled together for some little time; but since he met with no encouragement Tarbong at last desisted, and once more returned to his mother. "Well!" said Itpumu, "what did you see this time?" to which he replied: "Mother, I saw a very lovely girl making wooden penises. I tried hard to possess her, but she would not let me approach her." In reply to this Itpumu said: "Now, my son, if you really want to possess that girl you must go to your brother, he that lives in Ragzum Partam, and he will tell you what to do."

Tarbong at once set off to visit his brother. He told him the whole story: how he found the girl making penises and how he had tried unsuccessfully to rape her, and asked for his brother's advice. "I take it that you really want this girl," said the brother; to which Tarbong replied that he did. "Very well then, I must first tell you that you will never possess her until you have paid the marriage price (*Nyomfar*), and done the usual sacrifice (*Saunkyo Tsop Rumfat*). But first you must go to your Nepali blood-brother (*Ing-zong*) and buy a large copper vessel." Tarbong did as he was told, and was then ordered to go to his *Ing-zong* in Bhutan and bring back a length of a special kind of cloth (*Kamo*). He was then sent to his Tibetan *Ing-zong* to buy a rug (*Numbu*), and then to another Nepali blood-brother, who lived in the plains, to buy a special kind of pig called *Mulu Mayeng*. Next he was sent to Mayel and told to bring millet, after which he was ordered to visit yet another Tibetan in order to buy an ox. This also he did. Finally, his brother told him he must go to Mushyok Mutel, a place between heaven and earth, where there was a blacksmith, the only man in the world who at that time possessed any fire.

539 Tarbong was afraid to visit this place. "It is the abode of
581 devils," he said, "and they will surely eat me, a fate of which
773 I am not at the moment desirous." When it was clear that Tarbong had no intention of visiting this place his brother called all the animals, birds, and insects together and asked if anyone among them would volunteer to go in search of fire, at the same time offering a handsome present in return for this service. A pheasant smiled to itself and said it was ready to go. He set off, and when he reached the house of the blacksmith, who really was a devil, he found it quite empty, since everyone was out working in the fields. He went inside, where a fire was burning, snatched up a brand and immediately flew away. On the way back he came to a chestnut tree and decided to stay and eat a little of the fruit; but before doing this he laid the brand on the ground. While he was searching for the fruit a strong wind got up. This spread the fire so much that before long the whole world appeared to be on fire. The pheasant ran off in fear, but did not dare to return to its master: but since it got scorched in the fire this explains why pheasants now have short tails and black faces.

Parbong and his brother waited a long time for the bird to return. They did not realise what had happened although, of course, they could see the flames and smoke spreading gradually over the world. At last they grew impatient and asked for another volunteer. This time the firefly said it was willing to go; but only for a really good reward. When it reached the blacksmith's house the firefly found that again it was empty, so he entered and looked for the fire. Unfortunately, however, he had no means of carrying it away. He did not immediately return but sat there for a bit with his head on the ground and his feet in the air. This had the effect of causing the house to turn upside down. After a little while the blacksmith himself returned, and was astonished to find what had happened to his house. He searched all round to see who had done this mischief, and at last noticed the firefly standing on its head. He tried hard to catch it but

it managed to flutter away. "Why have you done this 539
mischief?" said the blacksmith. "Now I am going to kill 581
you." But to this the firefly replied: "Kill me, if you 773
like, but remember that if you do your house will remain upside down for ever." He then went on to tell the blacksmith why he had been sent. The latter thought for a bit and at last replied: "All right, I will give you the fire, but first you must put my house in order again." The blacksmith then took up some fire to give the insect, but suddenly realised that it had no means of carrying it. He searched about in the house and at last produced a flint and some tinder. These he stuck into the firefly's bottom, which explains why this creature still goes about with a fire in its tail.

As soon as the firefly returned it showed the two brothers how to use the flint and tinder. The elder brother lighted a fire and thought he would prepare some *chi*, when he realised that he had nothing with which to make it ferment. He was somewhat at a loss to know what to do when one Takder Ting, a retainer of the family, volunteered to go and fetch the ferment from an old woman named Numli Nyu, who lived in the plains and who alone possessed the secret.

Takder Ting stayed with her for a few days and soon made himself useful about the house, as a result of which she soon grew used to his presence. After he had been there for a day or two the old woman decided to make some ferment; but before commencing her preparations she took particular care
to cover Takder Ting with a *tangar*, which is a basket with [285]
such close mesh that he found it impossible to see out of it. When he had been covered over, however, he told the old woman that he could see everything, and suggested that if she really wanted to prevent him from seeing what she was doing
it would be better to cover him with a *tung-jyang*, which is a [285]
special kind of basket with a very open mesh. The old woman believed his story and did as he suggested. He told her that he could see nothing at all, although he could, of course, see perfectly all that was happening.

He watched very carefully, and presently saw the old

581 woman take a pot from inside her clothing and pour some-
539 thing out of it into her hand. This powder, for such it was,
773 she mixed with the millet, after which she put the pot back inside her bosom. She now collected all the millet and put it inside a basket, at the same time telling Takder Ting that he could now uncover himself.

After two days the fermenting millet smelt delicious, and then the old woman put all the *chi* into an earthen pot and covered it well up. Takder tried hard to get possession of this pot, but the woman never let it out of her sight. He was also beginning to despair of ever obtaining the pot of ferment when suddenly he had an idea. He told the old woman that she had a great many lice in her hair and suggested that he should pick them out for her. To this she agreed; and while he was searching for the vermin, which took a very long time, the old woman got sleepy, so that he was able to extract the pot from her bosom; after which he ran off as hard as he could go. When he was well away from the house the old woman woke up to what had happened and shouted after him. "I thought you were a good grandson to me," she said, "but I find you are nothing more than a common thief. You have stolen my ferment and now my secret will be spread all over the world." Then she cursed him, saying: "May this thing, which is harmless now, make people drunk and senseless whenever they drink *chi;* and when they are drunk may they quarrel among themselves." It is for this reason that nowadays drunken people often quarrel.

When Takder Ting returned he showed the two brothers how to make fermented *chi:* but since they had no earthen pots they made it in baskets and put it on the rack above the fire to dry and ferment, in exactly the same manner as is done by Lepchas nowadays. The brothers asked Takder Ting what reward he would like for all the trouble he had taken. "I want no gold and silver," he said; "nor do I want fine clothes. All that I wish is to be allowed to eat the remnants left on the plates after human beings have finished their meals, and the scraps that adhere to the spoon when

cooking." This request was granted, and the descendants 581
of Takder Ting, who was in reality a cockroach, continue to 539
live on such things up to the present day. 773

The *chi* was now ready; but since up to that time no one had ever drunk it, it was decided that a cobra should taste it first. He got very drunk, and shot away like a streak of lightning. When the others saw this happen they were afraid to taste this new and potent liquid. They then called another snake, one called Pumel Beu, which is some kind of grass snake. He drank the *chi;* and soon got so excited that he started to bite the people and other animals who were sitting round about. All those he bit died within a few minutes, so that when Sungay Rum, the god who is in charge of all animals, saw what had happened he at once put a lock on Pumel Beu's mouth, so that he is nowadays almost harmless.

After this the snake Poblyuk Beu, the python, was called to drink; but since he was big and strong the *chi* only had the effect of making him sleepy and senseless, and very soon he curled up in the bushes, sleeping peacefully. When they saw this the people decided that there was no harm in *chi;* for were not human beings also big and strong?

The only thing now lacking was butter for the sacrifice of *Saunkyo Fat* and this Tarbong's brother himself fetched from their mother, who herself prepared it. He took it back, prepared nine bamboo containers of *chi*, and smeared a little butter round the rim of each, just as a Mun does to-day when he wants to make an offering. Now all the gods and humans gathered together for the feast and Tarbong was married to Narip Nom. All the marriage gifts, the copper pot, the rug, and so on, were placed on one side, and the ox was tied up near. This was then sacrificed by Tarbong's brother and consumed by the assembled company.

After this Tarbong found that his sister no longer refused his advances, and he lay with her regularly with increasing pleasure. But they never had any children.

585 This story is always told at Lepcha weddings, at the time the animal sacrifice is made, and explains why a copper pot, pig, and other articles always form part of the marriage gifts. It was told me by the Mandal, who learnt it from his father when he was a young man. It is known to all Muns, but not by many "ordinary" people.

584 [576] When it is wished to arrange a marriage the parents of the boy concerned must first send for a *Pi-bo*, or go-between, as it is not etiquette to conduct the preliminaries in person. The meaning of this word is literally "a nicely-spoken person," which, in view of the use made of elegant periphrases during the course of the actual marriage ceremonies, well describe the duties of the office. The *Pi-bo* may be any suitabl experienced man; but in actual practice, in Lingtem, it i nearly always the Mandal.

584 431 The parents now prepare a special ceremonial gift know as *Khachyong*, which consists of eight pounds of fermented chi-millet, one rupee, and a Tibetan ceremonial scarf. If the las is not available six annas in cash may be sent in its place.

584 The *Khachyong* is taken by the boy's *Pi-bo* to the house o some near relative of the selected girl, usually to a brother o one or other of her parents; but in no circumstances may it b presented to the girl's parents direct. Having arrived at th village the *Pi-bo* ascertains from the girl's relative who wil act as her go-between, after which the two men visit him an hand over the *Khachyong*. In return for this present the girl' *Pi-bo* promises to see what he can do in the matter, and th boy's representative then returns to his own home. All this of course, is a mere formality, since in most cases it has bee previously ascertained, perhaps years before, that the proposed marriage is acceptable to all concerned.

The girl's *Pi-bo* keeps the chi-millet for himself, but take the rupee and the scarf to the girl's parents and discusses th proposed marriage with them. It is the custom for them a first to refuse, giving as excuse that the boy is too poor, or no of good enough family. The *Pi-bo* continues to plead wit them, and if unsuccessful in gaining their consent he return

again the next day. If he is still unable to move them he 584
returns a third time; and if he cannot persuade them on this
last occasion the matter is finally dropped, and the presents
returned to the boy's *Pi-bo;* but this does not often happen.

If the girl's parents agree to the marriage they send for a [793
Lama and ask him to work out the auspicious date for the 787]
Ashyek, or formal betrothal, to take place, after which the girl's go-between informs the boy, through his *Pi-bo*, that he should come on such-and-such a day. On the appointed day the boy, accompanied by his *Pi-bo*, sets out for the girl's home. They take with them one large copper pot (or twenty rupees in cash), sufficient cloth to make a dress for the girl's mother (or thirteen rupees in cash), and a *Gyachung* of three rupees. It appears that the *Gyachung* was originally a piece of cloth specially woven by the women of the boy's household; but since these are no longer made in Jongu the three rupees are given instead. To the above are added two pigs' carcases; but poorer people give only one.

All these presents are taken direct to the girl's home. When the party arrives the girl's parents ask why they have come. There is an exchange of compliments, followed by general conversation, after which the girl's parents usually say that while they are really unwilling for their daughter to marry perhaps it would be as well, after all, to let the matter go forward. They then present the boy's *Pi-bo* with one dead fowl, one rupee and a ceremonial scarf: all these he keeps for himself. This completes the betrothal, and the boy then returns to his own home.

One week later the boy goes alone to the girl's home, taking with him a present of one bullock's leg, which he presents to his future parents-in-law. He stays in the house for ten days and during this time he is expected to have sexual intercourse with his future bride; and the girl's father watches
carefully to see that he does so. So important is this con- [861]
sidered that the girl's father will, if necessary, beat the boy in order to make him co-operate. This, however, is only necessary with very young boys who have had no previous

584 sexual experience; or in a case where a particularly shy boy is being betrothed to some girl with whom he was previously unacquainted.

At the end of the ten days the boy returns to his own home; but he is now at liberty to visit the girl whenever he wishes. He usually goes to stay with her from time to time, and also brings her to his own home whenever it is convenient. This gradual weaning of the girl from her parents seems to me an admirable arrangement, for when the time comes for her to leave home finally there is no psychological wrench: she has already been able to adjust herself gradually to the new state of affairs. Even after marriage it is usual for a girl to go back to her parents from time to time, so that unless she has married into a very distant village she is at no time completely cut off from them.

There are no ceremonies intervening between betrothal and marriage, and the interval between the two is entirely dependent upon the wealth of the bridegroom's family. Provided that money and food are available for the necessary feasts the marriage can take place on the first auspicious day after betrothal: on the other hand it may be deferred for years if necessary; and may even never take place at all. [848] Once the pair have been formally betrothed there is no objection to their having children, since such are considered to be in every respect legitimate.

585 The actual day for the marriage is determined by a Lama, and a few days previously the boy escorts the girl back to her own home, should she happen not to be living there at the time. On the day before the wedding the bridegroom, together with his attendants, sets out to bring the bride to his own home, the whole party being known as *Nyom le-bu*. In addition to the bridegroom himself, it consists of his *Pi-bo*, one or other of his paternal uncles, and a boy friend known as *Myok tyol*, who is a sort of best man. They take with them one leg of pork and one rupee and six annas in cash. The six annas is known as *Sarong chut*. If this is not paid the women of the girl's household will rush out and attack the men with

nettles, which they have previously gathered against their 585 arrival. As soon as the *Sarong chut* is handed over the party is allowed to enter the house, where it spends the rest of the day and night feasting and drinking. The pork is consumed by the women only, and the men receive no share of it.

When the bridegroom's party arrives it is given a light meal of tea and parched rice, followed, of course, by the inevitable *chi*. Later on a special ceremonial meal known as *Sohol set* [262] *zo-kup* is served, which consists of cooked rice, pork, and two chickens, one of which is eaten by the bridegroom and the other by the bride's attendants.

Early the next morning the party returns to the boy's home. It is now augmented by the bride and her attendants, who are as follows:

Kegu Numbu:	He is the leader of the bride's party and should be an elderly and experienced man. The office is usually performed by some near relative.
Rum fat-bo:	A sacrificer. He makes the necessary offerings to the gods and is usually a Mun.
Aku:	The bride's younger paternal uncle.
Ajyong:	One or other of the bride's mother's brothers.
Changku:	Some elderly friend of the family and preferably a man of standing in the village. His duties are to prepare and distribute the meat at the wedding feast.
Nyom Moo:	One or other of the bride's mother's sisters.
Nyom Chimbu:	Bridesmaid. The bride's sister often undertakes this duty; but she must be unmarried.
Nyom Faming:	Bride's brother: younger, if possible. He represents all her male relatives.
Faming Tyol:	Male attendant upon the *Nyom Faming.*

In addition to the above there are also a number of men to

585 carry the necessary loads, so that the whole party forms quite an imposing gathering. It takes with it one complete pig's carcass, a full load of chi-millet and sixteen pounds of rice, half of which should be parched.

When the procession arrives within about half a mile of the bridegroom's home two boys are sent out to meet it. They take with them two bamboos of *chi*. One of these is given to the *Rum fat-bo*, and the other to the *Aku*. They first offer a little to the gods, after which the rest is distributed and consumed on the spot. In the meantime the two boys run back as hard as they can go and give warning that the procession is approaching.

343 415 273 A small shed, known as *Gor shun*, has been previously constructed outside the house and a number of bamboo containers filled with *chi* are now placed ready inside it. The bridal party is escorted straight to the *Gor shun*, where it immediately consumes the *chi* without further ceremony; the idea being to make all concerned a little intoxicated as quickly as possible, in order to make the party go with a swing. A light meal is now served, and a special pot of ceremonial unstrained *chi*, known as *Chi-lok*, is offered. This is covered with a cloth, and after being ceremonially offered is taken away again inside the house. It is not drunk and is used for libations to the gods.

As soon as the party has rested a little it is escorted inside the house, where the guests, usually the whole of the village, have already gathered and are probably no longer sober. 788 Each member of the party prostrates himself three times in front of the altar; after which all sit down on the floor, ranging themselves in a line along one wall, the bridegroom's attendants being seated along the opposite wall.

While a Mun is making a sacrifice to the family gods and demons of the girl's family in one room, the ceremony of handing the bride over takes place in another. For this purpose the respective *Pi-bos* stand up facing one another in front of the altar, but everyone else remains seated on the floor.

The bride's *Pi-bo* stands with a ceremonial scarf in one 585
hand and a rupee in the other, and addresses her as follows:

"You have now married into the X clan: now you are bound to its members; and if you have any lovers now is the time to drop them, for in future you should have no such connections outside your new family. In the beginning of all things Tarbong and Komsi originated marriage, and carried out the ceremony as we are doing it to-day. Now are you bound."

As he says these words he places the scarf round the bride's neck and puts the rupee into her joined hands and sits down again. The Mandal now asks the girl the names of her family gods and demons, and what sacrifices should be made to them, although these are, of course, already known to all concerned. Should she remain silent, or reply that she has none, some old man of the bridegroom's village will say to her: "You must not tell lies: we know perfectly well that you must have at least one personal god and demon; so speak up and tell us their names. Moreover, if later on you have any children and they get ill the Mun will certainly be able to find out who their supernaturals are, so you might just as well tell us the names now and be done with it."

If the girl still remains silent her *Aku* or *Ajyong* will reply for her, after which she is formally handed over to the bridegroom, the necessary conversation being carried out by means of somewhat obscene periphrases, of which the following are typical examples:

"Now we hand this egg (i.e. the bride) over to you, so look 585
after it carefully." It sometimes happens that the bride is 522
older than the boy, in which case a suitable reply to the above remark would be: "Very many thanks for the gift: but the egg does not look exactly new-laid."

If the girl is of such an age that it is likely that she has had many lovers someone will probably remark: "She certainly looks a little shop-soiled; and I imagine that her pubic hair is as long as Sor Mung's tresses." To this the correct reply is: "Well, you see, the fact is we have carefully shelled the eggs so

585 that it will be all the easier to eat." But to this the retort is:
522 "Yes: quite so. But it is obvious that the egg has not been
freshly shelled."

This sort of banter is continued until neither party can think of anything fresh to say. All the time it is going on the bride hangs her head demurely and covers her face with her hands in order to hide her blushes (if any): but since most of the assembled company are by this time distinctly drink-taken, to say the least of it, nobody takes any offence and the whole ceremony is conducted with the utmost good nature.

585 After this a special dish called *Hik zo-kup* is served to the bridal party and the assembled Lamas, should any be present. It consists of eight fowls cooked with rice. In the portion given to the bride there should be one leg which has been cooked complete, with the claws still on. Following this *Mon zo-kup*, which consists of pork and rice, is served: like the previous dish it too is not offered to the general company. While this is going on the presents brought by the bride (the pig's carcass, etc.) are brought in and put down in front of the altar. Now two old men of the bridegroom's village stand up and offer the *Nyom Kyomo*, as the present is called, to the gods. They turn towards the altar and tell the gods that the present has been brought by such-and-such a girl, who has come to live in the house from this time onwards. They then offer the gift in the same manner to the Lamas, who signify their assent by nodding their heads. The *Nyom Kyom* is then taken up and put away in the next room.

A general meal of meat, rice, vegetables, and so on is now served to everybody, including the bride and bridegroom, who both eat out of the same plate on this occasion. By the time it is finished it will probably be already dark, but nobody thinks of going home. Some of the guests continue drinking throughout the night; others fall asleep where they sit. Every square inch of the floor is occupied and the atmosphere is like nothing so much as a London fog: nobody minds.

Early the following morning everyone is roused with *chi*, a

bamboo of which is put down in front of each of the guests. 585
As soon as the guests have somewhat collected themselves a 585
meal of bullock's lights is served; it seems to me a most 262
unsuitable dish to offer at dawn on the "morning after." When this delicacy has been disposed of a further meal of rice, vegetables, and so on, in fact the ordinary daily fare, is served. This is followed by yet another dish known as *Alook Zo*, which consists of rice and ribs of beef. It is served to everybody present; but each member of the bride's party receives a piece of raw beef to take home. This is placed on top of the dish of cooked food and is known as *Mangkar*. It is as though, when one goes out to dinner, one finds a juicy raw chop resting on top of the savoury, which one quietly removes and puts in one's pocket. I think it a nice idea.

In the meantime still another bullock, called *Myok Long*, has 585
been tied up a little distance from the house, and to this spot such members of the party as are still capable of walking now proceed. When they get there the bridegroom tells them that the animal has cost him thirty rupees. A certain amount of argument now follows, in which various men express their opinion as to the real worth of the animal; and if the general opinion is that it is not really worth more than, say, twenty-five rupees, then the bridegroom must pay the difference in cash to the bride's attendants. The *Rum fat-bo* is now summoned. He is presented with one rupee and a scarf and sits down near the bullock, with a bamboo of *chi* at his side. He offers the animal to the gods and demons, meanwhile the bride's younger brother kills it with a bow and arrow.

The bride and bridegroom now come and stand before the Mun. "From now on," he says to them, "live peaceably together; or failing this may you be gored by a bullock like this one now lying dead in front of us." To this little speech he adds his personal congratulations and tells the bride that he hopes she will be blessed with at least six boys and six girls.

The party now returns to the house, and there then follows 585
a ceremony called *Ong Kay*. A large plate is put in the middle 431
of the principal room, and into this the bridegroom's parents,

585 431 or anyone standing in their place, put a ceremonial scarf and one rupee. After this everyone present, with the exception of the bride's official attendants, puts in a coin according to his means or desire, the amounts varying from five rupees down to an anna or two. An average sum collected in this way would amount, so I was told, to about forty rupees; but it is not uncommon for as much as one hundred rupees to be 585 466 collected in the *Ong Kay*. The money is distributed as follows:

Kegu Nunbu	Five rupees
Rum fat-bo	Four rupees
Aku	Four rupees
Ajyong	Four rupees
Changku	Three rupees
Nyom Moo	Six rupees
Nyom Chimbu	Three rupees
Nyom Faming	Three rupees
Faming tyol	Three rupees
Load-carriers	Eight annas each

The ceremonial scarf contributed by the bridegroom's parents is given to the bride, but she does not receive any of the money. If the amount collected at the *Ong Kay* is insufficient for the above payments, the balance must be made up by the bridegroom, who, alternatively, retains any balance.

The bridegroom now pays six rupees to his wife's *Pi-bo* and five rupees to his own, and gives to each a ceremonial scarf. At the same time each receives some eight pounds of mixed beef and pork. After this some man of standing in the village takes the two *Pi-bos* aside: he tells them that in arranging this marriage they have possibly been put to considerable trouble, and have doubtless had to suffer many insults. He adds that all is now successfully over, and he hopes that neither will take umbrage at anything that may have happened. The two men assure him that all is well, thank [431] him for his remarks and give him a couple of annas each.

This little ceremony, if it can be dignified by such a name, is 585
called *Pi-bo azom.* 431

This completes the second day's proceedings; but, as 585
before, drinking and conversation are continued well into the night. At about one a.m. one of the *Pi-bos* goes round with a large bowl of the special ceremonial unstrained *chi* and offers it to each of those present. As before, it is not consumed: it is merely offered as an indication that the day's ceremonies are over and that everyone should from then onwards at least talk quietly if he does not wish to sleep.

On the third morning everyone is again wakened with a 585
bowl of *chi.* Lights, however, are not again served, but on 262
this occasion all the guests are given *Tum cheu,* or the entrails of the bullock killed the day before, stuffed with meat of various kinds. These are prepared by the *Changku,* who, as we have already noted, is in entire charge of the distribution of meat. This meal of sausage is followed by another of ordinary rice and vegetables, on top of which is put a hunk of raw beef for each member of the bride's party. As her attendants leave for home each one tears a bit off the joint he has received and returns it to the donor: this symbolises the presentation of a return gift.

The marriage is now over and the bridegroom makes ready 585
to escort the bride, together with all her attendants, back to 431
her home. Before they leave they are presented with a special gift of food called *Lom-to Lom-chong,* which consists of eight pounds of chi-millet and eight pounds of rice. This is meant to be consumed on the way back; but even if the two houses are only a few hundred yards apart the present must be given just the same. The party also takes with it a present known as *Dong-chong Dong-len,* which consists of a load of chi-millet for the bride's parents.

When the party reaches the girl's home the bride and 585
bridegroom remain there for either three or seven days; but 591
they must on no account leave on any of the intervening 431
days, which are considered inauspicious. When they finally leave for the husband's home they are given a present called

585 *Gor-nen*, which is made up of sixteen pounds of grain of various
591 sorts and one complete load of chi-millet. As soon as the pair
[431] reach home the *Gor shun*, which, as we have already seen, was specially constructed for the accommodation of the bride's party, is knocked down without further ceremony; but it should on no account be demolished until the husband returns with his wife.

591
[431] Seven days later husband and wife once again set off for the girl's home, taking with them the inevitable load of chi-millet, and eight pounds of grain. Nothing is laid down as to when they should return; and from this time the pair continues to divide its time between the two houses, or at least to pay periodical visits to the girl's home.

[431] One year after marriage a girl may, if she feels so disposed, present her parents with a pig's carcass and another load of chi-millet. This is known as *Nyim phet;* and when it is given it is customary for the parents to make a return present of a milch cow: this is called *Pi jong*. The cow is not, however, actually given to the girl but is merely shown her. If she gives her parents another *Nyim phet* the following year the *Pi jong* becomes her property and she may then take the cow away with her when she leaves.

585 Whatever we may think of Lepcha marriage, it does at
571 least afford a chance for the village to break away for a day or two from its otherwise dull routine, and gives people from distant villages an excuse to meet and talk things over. Moreover, everybody knows exactly what he is expected to contribute: in lean times the dictates of custom are sufficiently observed by putting as little as a couple of annas in the *Ong kay*. But in any case the guest is free from our periodic nightmare of "what shall I give?"; and the bride and bridegroom in their turn are spared an accumulation of the Lepcha equivalent of unwanted plated cruets. It all seems admirably contrived; and a good time is had by all.

587 *14th March:*

Ongden, a man of fifty and the father of the largest family

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142

Ongden, a bridegroom of fifty.

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Ongden's new wife (in the bottom left-hand corner, wearing a white bodice) arriving at his house for the wedding. Her attendants are just about to enter the house.

[facing p. 258]

587 in Lingtem, is being married to-day. His first wife died a year ago, and he is now marrying a childless widow of twenty-four. It seems that in the eyes of the village he has 77 struck lucky; for in normal circumstances it is not considered auspicious for a girl to marry a widower. In this particular case, however, the girl's deceased husband had no brothers; nor was anyone else entitled to inherit her, so the present arrangement suits both parties. The only fly in to-day's 78 ointment is that the birth-signs of the bride and bridegroom are antagonistic; so much so, in fact, that many people think the marriage foredoomed to failure. Ongden, however, is quite well-off, and in any case, being himself a Lama, can probably obtain special terms from the faculty for the services which will restore the balance of ill-luck. But in view of the special circumstances both he and his bride think the risk worth taking.

587 273 We were summoned to the house at nine-thirty, but nothing much was happening when we arrived. We went first to the kitchen, where some thirty or forty people were sitting quietly soaking, after which we were shown into the altar-room, where the actual ceremony will take place. Six Lamas were sitting against the wall: they too were drinking. The second Dorje-Lopön appeared to be in charge, and the others all had 534 instruments, the usual six-foot trumpets, clarionets and drums.

778 587 On the altar were a number of *tormas* of rice, decorated with dabs of coloured butter. Into these were stuck several rather crudely coloured pictures of gods, the centre one of which was said to represent Guru Rimpoche. Behind these one of the usual Tibetan pictures had been hung; but it was so old and tattered as to make its details unrecognisable. There was also a small brass vessel filled with holy water, into the neck of which a peacock's feather had been stuck; also a beer bottle, said to contain spirits. I also noticed a number of small bowls filled with rice and other grains, and several oranges and a heap of walnuts. In front of all was a row of 373 small lamps, the last of which was only lighted when the bride arrived.

587 More guests now started to arrive, and as each one came in [788] he prostrated himself in front of the altar and then sat down on the floor. By eleven o'clock it was said that some 130 guests were present; and certainly there was not even room on the floor to stretch out one's legs. We had to sit cross-legged on a small carpet, which was unfortunately placed too far away from the wall to enable one to lean back, as a result of which I soon had an intolerable ache in the small of my back.

At about midday the Lamas started to tune up their instruments and to chant in a desultory way. All but one read out of a book. I was told that the chanting consisted in the endless repetition of the names of hundreds of gods. No [781] one paid the slightest attention to what was going on; nor did the Lamas themselves seem to concentrate overmuch on what they were doing. The chanting alternated with bursts of instrumental playing, with frequent intervals for drinking in between. After a time the whole performance degenerated into a semi-somnolent drone, rather like bees on a hot afternoon in summer: but every now and then a loud bang on the cymbals would wake the rest of the performers into a brief frenzy of cacophony, which soon subsided into a drone again. Apart from the music, the atmosphere in the Black Hole of Calcutta must, I imagine, have been somewhat like this.

While we were waiting hopefully for something to happen I asked Dhawa to find out if the bride and bridegroom were [836] previously acquainted. This caused much laughter in view of the fact that she is expecting a baby in about three months' time.

The bridal party arrived at about one o'clock; but since this was a second marriage for both the parties concerned Ongden did not trouble to escort the bride from her home. As the party arrived he was standing outside the house, but he paid not the slightest attention to the procession; nor did anyone take any notice of him. The bridal party went straight inside the house and took up their places along one wall. The bride kept the lower part of her face hidden in a

cloth, but I do not think she was really shy: this was merely 587
the attitude proper to such an occasion.

The chanting and music continued at intervals; and still [781]
no one paid any attention. A little later Ongden himself came in and sat down on the floor at the end of the row of the bride's attendants. His entry did not seem to be in any way formal; but almost as soon as he was seated the bride's *Pi-bo* got up and made a short speech. While this was in progress general conversation ceased: but before it was finished one of the Lamas cut in with what was obviously [831]
an obscene remark, whereupon everybody started talking again.

Nothing further happened until 4.30, when the ceremony of killing the bullock (as already described) was performed. By this time we were feeling so battered that a short rest was imperative if we were to take an intelligent interest in the evening's proceedings.

We returned at 7.30. Both the kitchen and altar-rooms were now completely filled with people and the smoke was so dense that one could only with difficulty see across the room. Most of those present were now in a semi-maudlin state; but quite a few had already passed out and lay snoring peacefully on the floor. Conversation was being carried on [521]
in a subdued undertone: even when under the influence of drink these people never seem to raise their voices, and still talk quietly and without losing their tempers. As we arrived Chotembu's wife was doing her drunken best to sing, at the same time dancing slowly round the room so far as the crowd permitted. At one time she came and stood in front of us and improvised a verse or two. We could not induce anyone to translate; but I gather the purport was obscene, since it caused much laughter. In the kitchen room a meal was being prepared and would later be served to all the guests. Several people were fast asleep on the floor among the bullock's intestines and bloody head, a grotesque sight in the flickering half-light of the smoky fire.

There were no further ceremonies and we left at midnight,

587 but the party was continued until dawn the next day. Since this was not a first marriage the full three-day festivities were not carried out: nor will Ongden and his bride make the usual ceremonial visit to her people. In this particular case there was, I gather, really no need for him to have done any ceremony except the formal betrothal; but since he is
[554] a man of standing in the village he has preferred to do things properly. In any case, no Lepcha will miss the opportunity of throwing a party, provided the necessary funds are available.

15th March:

A number of "corpses" lying about under the bushes. Most of these had removed themselves by nightfall.

* * * * *

583 Before betrothal a boy usually does a certain amount of work for his future father-in-law, and may even stay in his house should he happen to live in the same village. This service is entirely voluntary and is in no sense looked upon as payment for the bride. After the formal betrothal has taken place, however, the girl's parents can call upon the boy's services for a period of three years; but if the marriage takes place within this period the obligation ceases.

591 When a man has a daughter and no sons he arranges, if
584 possible, that his son-in-law shall live in his house, in which case the boy becomes what is known as a *Komok myok*. In these circumstances he is treated exactly as though he were the real son of the house, except that he has a less hard time. It is not always easy for a man to obtain a *Komok myok* for his daughter; for unless such a boy has several brothers his father will not normally wish to lose him, since it means that he will have no one to help him work his own fields.

431 When a man is so poor that he cannot afford even the
585 minimum marriage gifts everyone in the village helps him. This is looked upon as a gift and is not repayable. It is,

585

of course, in addition to the actual cash contributed by the 431
guests at the *Ong kay* already described.

There is a modified form of betrothal ceremony known 584
as *Ah-kut*, which is done by people who cannot afford the 574
full *Ashyek* payments. It consists in the presentation of one 585
pig's carcass to the bride's parents. No one would willingly be married by means of *Ah-kut*, which may be compared with our marriage by Registrar, if he could possibly afford to carry out the full ceremony, for it is a point of honour with Lepchas to entertain one's friends to the full limit of one's purse; and a failure to do so, should funds be available, would be to stamp oneself as a mean fellow and a bad cooperator. *Ah-kut*, however, constitutes full legal marriage, and no further ceremony is necessary.

Except for the additional wives a man may acquire by 595
inheritance Lepchas do not normally marry a second wife [842]
unless the first proves to be childless. The custom of marry- [177]
ing additional wives would appear to be an importation,
probably through contact with Nepalis, for the language [192]
does not contain any specific word to denote a second wife,
the Nepali word *Kanchi* being commonly used for this pur-
pose. I am, of course, aware that it is dangerous to base an
hypothesis of this sort on linguistic evidence alone; but it is
significant that in other parts of Sikkim and adjacent British [184]
India Lepchas are monogamous except for the additional
wives some acquire by inheritance.

In Jongu it appears that a childless woman nearly always
induces her husband to marry again. If possible he will take
one of his first wife's sisters, or possibly a niece; but in any
case he should try and obtain some sort of relative of his
wife, since this arrangement is thought to cause less domestic
friction than might otherwise be the case. It sometimes 595
happens, however, that a man decides to remarry without 431
reference to his first wife (as in the case of Aga, for instance),
in which case the new wife must give a present, known as
Thim seut. It does not take any special form. The new wife
should also give something to the eldest child of the first
wife.

000 wife. It appears that in such cases the first wife's feelings
595 are not in any way considered, and the *Thim seut* is given, not to appease her but to prevent her becoming ill, which might otherwise be the case.

586 If a man wishes to divorce his wife he must pay eight-eighty rupees in cash to her father and give her one-half of all his movable property. This is known as *Gay-top*. Children also are divided between the two parents by mutual arrangement. Should there be an only daughter her eventual marriage price will be divided between the parents; and in the case of an only son it is usual for him to remain with his father, who pays the mother an additional forty rupees, one cow, one pig and a length of cloth for this privilege. A daughter may live with either parent; but whatever the decision, the question of payment does not in her case arise. In exceptional circumstances it may be arranged that a son shall remain with his mother, and in this case she gives the above presents to her husband, substituting an ox for the cow and a copper pot for the length of cloth.

There are no cases of divorce in Lingtem within living memory, nor does it often happen elsewhere; but in view of the constitution of Lepcha society there would appear to be little need of divorce, since it fulfils no useful function.

PART SIX

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FESTIVALS

[p.265]

[p.266 is blank]

CHAPTER 12

Religious Ceremonies

21st March:

796 DURING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's cele-
293 brations. A number of Lamas arrived during the
533 evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafoor says the following is an average amount per person:

3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: topers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought contributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

While the feasting was going on outside the monastery 796
the actual service was carried on in the main room of the
building. To us it appeared to be little more than indis-
criminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the
whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan [779]
book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From
time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the
general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared
to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls
filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I 796
saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of 522
Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and 831
the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted
embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some
milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and
tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general
laughter; and although a number of old people were present
they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their
presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some
personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she
again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into
his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away.
There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and
Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively
devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of
this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who
has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of
thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim,
where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery
compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much [781]
at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown
at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery 796
garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up.
The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank [358]
Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

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533 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

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789 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

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778 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen : Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men; Ditchen Phoop;* and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

a separate name. It was found that the entire company 796
could not be accommodated on the *Pong Rum* itself, so the 778
overflow was arranged on a brass tray, which the Lamas, however, later forgot about and never put on the altar. In the centre of the *Pong Rum* and immediately in front of the central cone was a yak's head (*Yok thyak*) made of dough, but nobody seemed to know its significance. The preparation of the entire offering took four men roughly five hours. At the end of the ceremony it will be broken up and eaten; but the men who have made it are not allowed to taste it, which seems unjust. This morning the whole thing was brought out of the monastery and each of the five main cones further embellished by the addition of a sort of tin cape on which a design was built up in butter coloured bright red, blue, yellow and green. The whole thing now looks like the sweets served on Lloyd-Triestino liners and is, I should imagine, equally unpalatable. It was now taken inside and placed on a table in front of the altar, immediately in front of the central figure of Guru Rimpoche. Later on, bowls of water and several lighted lamps were put down in front of it, and a jar of incense was lighted at one side.

There was the usual periodic chanting, like bees swarm- 796
ing, alternating with the usual bursts of music, and the actual ceremony did not appear to be different from that of the 21st, although to the initiated the order of the service was doubtless completely different.

About midday a small table was brought out and placed on the grass in front of the monastery. A bowl of *sher-kem*, the special ceremonial *chi* with maize and other grain floating in it, was placed on this, together with a large brass tray containing a number of small *tormas*. A young novice now came and stood by the table, took up one of the *tormas* in a spoon, and dipped it in the mixture. Having done this he held the spoon out at arm's length until there was what I can only describe as a musical orgasm inside the building, when he threw it from him with a shout of *loch!* whereupon

796 it was at once snapped up by one of the numerous dogs waiting on the edge of the grass for this purpose. This was repeated at short intervals for about an hour, when one of the Lamas decided that it had gone on long enough and threw the remains of the liquid and the *tormas* away without further ceremony.

Palden says that the belief is that Konchen and the other gods come down from the mountain and enter the *tormas* as soon as the service starts and only return to their homes on its conclusion.

At about six in the evening, just when it was growing dark, the whole *Pong Rum* was carefully removed from its place in front of the altar. It was first exhibited to the assembled Lamas inside the building and was then carried in procession once round the monastery. Except for the two men carrying it, the Lamas remained inside the building, but
[788] most of the spectators walked behind the offering, some of them turning prayer-wheels and chanting as they went. One man seemed almost fervent (or was it merely the drink?) and called upon the mountain god to bless him; and several told the carriers to halt a moment at the corner so that the gods could see the offering; but by this time Kinchinjunga was completely obscured by clouds. It is believed that the spirits take their departure while the *Pong Rum* is being carried round the building.

As soon as the procession reached the main door again the offering was put down on the ground unceremoniously and quickly torn to pieces and distributed to all present. Some people first put their portion to their foreheads in an attitude of reverence before stuffing it into their bosoms to take home; others treated the host with no reverence and consumed it straight away. Following the distribution of
[535] the consecrated *tormas*, Katel, who was rather drunk, put a hat, scarf and two unsheathed knives on the ground in front of the altar and then did a slow and rather solemn dance, keeping time to the beating of the drum and cymbals. It was said that this was not an integral part of the ceremony.

After this the two feast-givers and their complete households 796
came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopõn then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of [788]
it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole [781]
proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass [778]
dorje, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopõn. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had 796
been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: [533]

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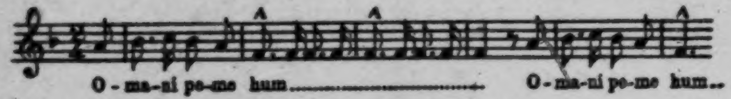

ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*

721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-nga*, meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

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[778]

Lamas preparing the *tormas* which will later be offered to Kinchinjunga.

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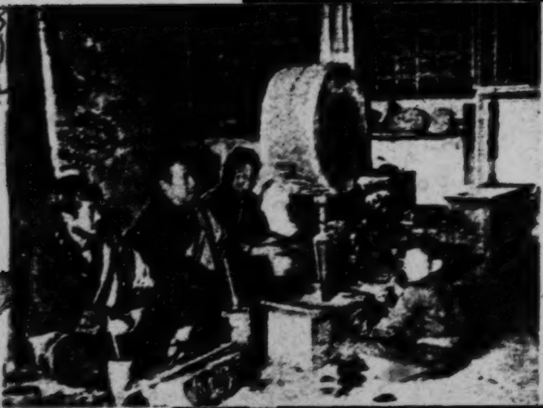

Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778
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At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p.274]

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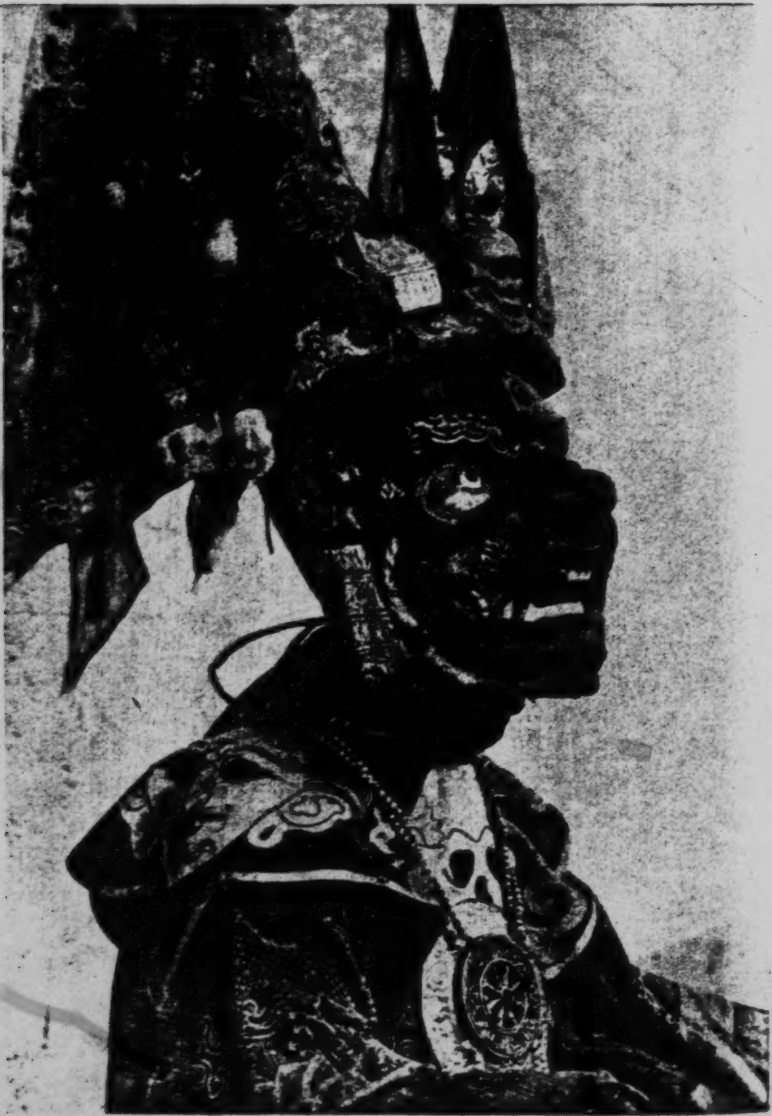

Masked Lama dressed to represent the god Kuvera, the embodiment of Kinchinjunga.

[Facing p. 275]

535 commander of all the guardians of the faith, and overlord
721 of all spirits, is invoked by the Lamas to command Dzo-nga
to guard the Buddhist religion and the State of Sikkim, and
to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people.

All Lama dances are to some extent regarded as physical exercises to counteract the sedentary life of the monks; but the Sikkim war dance is not performed exclusively by Lamas, but also by youths of the upper classes, mostly the sons of the various State officials. It is not so much a dance as a display of agility, discipline, and energy, in which considerable powers of endurance are required. It aims at combining physical training with a feeling of religious zeal and
834 exaltation; and for this reason all the dancers are required to remain celibate during the month or so in which they train and prepare for the ceremony. They are also expected not to drink during this period of preparation; but during the actual performance, which lasts for some six hours or so, they are kept going by frequent draughts of alcohol. The ceremony is rendered impressive and dignified by the religious rite which is being carried on inside the monastery during the whole time the dance is being performed outside.

789 In spite of the fact that the war dance always takes place during the height of the monsoon, the selected day is nearly always fine, a special Lama being employed to keep the rain away. On the day previous to the ceremony he makes a large figure of a toad out of dough, buries it deep in the ground and lights a fire above it. He meditates inside the monastery but returns to the spot where he has buried the image in order to utter spells from time to time. Several
813 years ago, so the Maharaja told me, it rained throughout the day of the dance; but when the performance was over it was discovered that the Lama had buried the image of a tortoise, apparently as an experiment to see what would happen. Except for a heavy shower while we were at luncheon to-day it was fine and sunny; but heavy rain came on in the evening and continued for several days almost without stopping.

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721 This dance differs from all others of the sort I have seen in that the performers, except for the figures of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, are not masked. It consists of an almost continuous slow circling round and round, with a great deal of sword-brandishing; more like the sort of thing one sees at a military tournament, except that the performers are all dressed in elaborate costumes of Chinese silks of various bright and highly contrasting colours.

The warriors formed up in two long lines as each of the two gods made its first entry from behind the dark brown curtains which covered the front of the monastery, after which the slow circling was again resumed. Both Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala did a rather dull *pas seul*, which went on much too long; it, too, consisted of the same slow circling, without any variation in the step. After a time each god gradually danced nearer and nearer the monastery entrance and finally disappeared within. The whole performance appeared to be without either beginning or end, and there seemed to be no reason why it should have ever finished. It was an attractive spectacle for the first twenty minutes or so, perhaps because of the brightly-coloured dresses, after which it quickly became intensely boring owing to the entire lack of variety. The music was provided by drums, cymbals, and clarionets and consisted of the *O mani peme hum* tune which we got to know so well in Lingtem, with the addition of indiscriminate undertones played on the long ten-foot monastery trumpets. I think the tune is more pleasing, however, when sung unaccompanied, as it always was by the Inebus in Lingtem.

The dance ended with the circumambulation of the monastery by all the performers, including the two horses which are dedicated to the service of Kinchinjunga and Maha Kala, and never ridden from the day they are born. They were plumed and draped in thick Chinese brocades and looked most impressive; but considerable efforts on the part of their grooms were necessary before they could be persuaded to take their part in the formal procession.

PART SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

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CHAPTER 13

ECONOMICS

177 MOST books dealing with primitive peoples contain at least one depressing chapter on the evils resulting from European contact, either through missionaries, education, or trading; but in this particular case the British Government, which has indeed made far too many mistakes in India, can be held completely blameless, in view of the fact that Sikkim is an independent state; and although one or two missionaries have been allowed to work in the country they have so far not been permitted to [426] carry on their activities in Jongu. But every piece must have its villain; and in Jongu he is the local money-lender.

[651] 437 426 Although the people are very lightly taxed, the provision of the actual cash necessary for this purpose has introduced a complicating factor, for prior to the introduction of direct taxation the Lepchas depended entirely upon barter for such few of their needs as they could not themselves produce. Indeed, they still use only this system in dealings among themselves. Suppose, for instance, that a man has a surplus of grain at the end of the season. He does not sell it, but either makes it into *chi* or loans it to some fellow-villager who may be short of food. If the borrower repays the loan within one year no interest is charged: otherwise fifty per cent is added to the principal when the loan is repaid—in kind, of course. In return for the use of plough oxen it is usual to give the lender eight pounds of grain per day; but if a bullock is required for a sacrifice or ceremony it is usual to repay the loan in kind. If this cannot be done for some considerable time the borrower usually takes a chicken and some *chi* to the lender, but apart from this no interest is charged.

439 Until about twenty years ago most of the Jongu people
426 used to take forest dyes to Lachen, in North Sikkim, which they exchanged for Tibetan salt and wool. They kept a certain amount of this salt for their own use, but the bulk of it they took into Darjeeling, where they exchanged it for raw cotton, which their women spun into cloth. But gradually the money-lender, who all over India is also a general-trader, wormed his way into Sikkim; and found the Lepchas easy prey. One rather unexpected result of this is that the Jongu people no longer wander far from home; and although most of the older people have been often as far afield as Darjeeling and Kalimpong, very few of the younger generation have been further than Gangtok, and only then for a very occasional jaunt.

439 In the days before the money-lenders arrived most of the
608 Jongu people had a number of *Ingzong*, or blood-brothers, in various parts of the country in order to facilitate their trading relations. A few of the people still have *Ingzong* in Lachen, but the system seems to be gradually lapsing except as a means of cementing a close friendship. Thus, a number of Lingtem men have become *Ingzong* with fellow-villagers; but in these cases the relationship has no economic basis.
[476] In times of trouble an *Ingzong* will help one, and even work one's fields, if necessary. Karma says that one can always be sure of a good meal at the house of an *Ingzong;* but apart from this, it is useful to have a friend whom one can regard almost as a relation. He says there is no ceremony in acquiring an *Ingzong;* but the two men will usually drink out of the same bowl and exchange ceremonial scarves. If one wishes, one can cease the relationship: this is not done formally, but merely allowed to lapse gradually and natur-
[834] ally. There are apparently no sexual privileges with the womenfolk of an *Ingzong,* nor, on the other hand, any particular taboos; but owing to the fact that sexual relations among the Lepchas are, in any case, so free, my information on this point is somewhat conflicting. The *Ingzong* relationship is carried out only by men.

The money-lenders were first established in Mangen about 426 thirty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in Mangen: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185] owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangen, he never considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or an animal for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the cardamom crop, without regard for what the current rate for that particular year may eventually be. It makes no difference [436] what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435] pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing. Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436 with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will 435] not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should this be available, nor will they accept any form of payment at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be sued in court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

426 fact, the Sikkim Laws lay down that no money-lender may charge a higher rate than this; but who can control this in a district where the money-lender himself is the only one who can read and write? People are required to give a receipt when they take a loan, but all they can do in actual practice is to affix their thumb-impression to the account written out by the money-lender himself: they neither know nor care what he has written. All that interests them is that they have been able to satisfy their immediate requirements, and it is only later, when the money-lender forecloses on them, [185] that they find out how they have been cheated. With a view to remedying this state of affairs a Jongu boy was sent to Gangtok in order to be educated, with the idea that on his return he could at least give the people some help in their dealings with the traders; but unfortunately he was only taught Tibetan! The Mandal thinks the only remedy would be to insist upon the money-lenders keeping their accounts in that language, an arrangement comparable with ordering an English bank to keep its accounts in Chinese.

426 439 A further cause of debt is that the money-lender takes every opportunity of foisting unwanted goods upon the Lepchas, who have not the strength of mind to refuse, especially when no payment is demanded at the time. This usually takes the form of cotton material of the very poorest [241] quality, as a result of which most of the people, and particularly the children, are nowadays clothed in material ill suited to the climate. At one time they used a great deal of wool; but in recent years most of the Tibetan wool has been taken down to Kalimpong, where it is sold in bulk and shipped to America; and it is only when the bottom falls out of the American market, as it has at the moment of writing, that the Lepchas can afford to buy wool, for the price is otherwise much higher than they can afford. I tried to explain the mystery of fluctuating prices to them, but it was impossible to make them understand that a man at the end of a telephone in a distant country, the name of which they had not even heard, was ultimately responsible for deciding

whether they should get warm woollen clothes, or have to 426
put up with shoddy cotton. I should like to think that at 439
least the Tibetan farmer made something out of the transaction; but he, too, is in the hands of the Indian money-lenders in Kalimpong, caught in the intricacies of a vicious circle. The remedy is, of course, obvious; but in present circumstances almost impossible of attainment.

Cardamoms are a State monopoly, and the right to trade 655
in them has been sold to the official State Bankers, an out- 651
side concern which, in its turn, also controls all the money-lenders in the State. This is a convenient arrangement for the authorities and saves the provision of numerous extra officials; but even if the State itself assumed control of the business there would be no means of ensuring that the peasants were not cheated, petty (and usually underpaid) officials being much the same all over the East. Under the present system of taxation the people must obviously grow cardamoms, as in no other way can they raise the necessary cash with which to pay their taxes: and from a theoretical point of view their cultivation is a source of extra profit. Indeed, this actually is the case in many parts of Sikkim, where the people are more sophisticated, and better able to safeguard their own interests. There is no doubt that when the Maharaja's predecessors introduced this plant into Sikkim they did so with the motive of improving the people's economic condition; but in those days no one could be expected to foresee the disastrous effects of introducing uncontrolled monetary trading into an illiterate community, organised on socialist lines, which previously had no need of actual cash. As it is, cardamoms are a perfect curse in Jongu.

CHAPTER 14

A LETTER TO THE MAHARAJA OF SIKKIM

000 YOUR HIGHNESS,

You asked me to let you know what I thought about the Lepchas when I got back from Jongu; and the following notes are in amplification of the talk we had in Gangtok last August. If I have been somewhat outspoken in my criticisms I know you will forgive me because, like Your Highness, I, too, find these a very attractive and lovable people; and any suggestions I have to make are only offered with a view to helping them.

The most important thing is, I think, to discover why they are so rapidly dying out. You yourself told me that it is very 842 generally believed in Sikkim that the extremely high rate of sterility among the Lepchas is due to the practice of several brothers sharing a wife. It may be that this has some bearing on the matter, but there is no scientific evidence to support such a theory. Nor, I think, would any modern biologist agree that constant intermarriage for several generations within a small group results in sterility. In refutation of this theory I need only instance the Gurkhas (some tribes of which practise cross-cousin marriage as a regular custom), who are, as you are well aware, extremely prolific. But, in any case, the Lepchas in Jongu do not permit cross-cousin marriage; nor, indeed, do they marry relatives of any sort, except those so distant as to be no relatives at all. I think that the custom of very young girls cohabiting with grown men undoubtedly causes a certain amount of sterility, but it is insufficient by itself to account for the very low birth-rate in Jongu. It is, I think, fairly obvious that some of the men, too, are sterile; but this again is only a minor factor.

It is very interesting to compare the size of the Jongu 184
families with that of the Christian Lepcha community in the 593
Kalimpong district, details of which I have given in Appendix I. It is true that the latter are strictly monogamous, a fact which tends, at first sight, to support your theory; but I find that the non-Christian Lepchas in the district have equally large families. I should add, however, that there is
a marked tendency even among them to drop the old custom [177]
of inheriting one's deceased elder brother's wife; and I am told that the sexual rights of brothers are here not regarded.

As a result of comparing these figures I have come to the 185
conclusion that the reason why the Lepchas in Jongu are dying out is to a great extent psychological, although I should find it difficult to support this theory with adequate scientific evidence. The Jongu people *know* they are a dying race, and realise perfectly well that they have only been able to retain their separate entity as long as they have by reason of the artificial protection afforded them by making Jongu a Lepcha reserve. Left to themselves they were bound to be submerged; for the admirable customs of co-operation and sharing without regard to individual interests, which are the most pleasing and striking characteristics of their culture, are not yet sufficiently appreciated even in the so-called civilised parts of the world; and when they came into contact with the predatory Nepalese, who have no socialist feelings, something was bound to happen, since the Lepchas had no means of defending themselves; nor is it in their nature to oppose force of any sort. Nor, I think, does their religion give them anything to hold on to, for the Buddhism practised in Jongu has degenerated into little more than an elaboration of the original propitiation of evil spirits to which these people were always enslaved.

I am no advocate of Christian missionaries, for I think 797
that in many parts of the world they have done more harm than good to many primitive communities; and it has always seemed to me a form of arrogance to destroy existing, and in many cases excellent, religions and replace them with

000 another; one, moreover, the tenets of which are not yet sufficiently practised in our own country. But there can be 797 nothing but praise for the work done by the Church of Scotland among the Lepchas and others in the Kalimpong and adjacent districts, where, owing to the inspired leadership of Dr. Graham, whose ideas are still generations ahead of the average orthodox missionary, there has been no destruction but only a building up and strengthening of what was already in existence. In the Kalimpong hills the missionaries attach most importance to raising the standards of health and living, and in most cases conversion only takes place at the personal request of the individual concerned, for it is realised that the good life is not necessarily the prerogative of Christians. As a matter of fact the majority of the Christians in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling districts are Lepchas; not, I think, because there is less difference between Buddhism and Christianity, and the latter and Hinduism, but because the Lepchas have no caste. It is, for instance, possible for one member of a Lepcha family to become a Christian without his relations with the rest of the family becoming in any way estranged, whereas the Nepali, to take the most obvious other example, who is a Hindu, becomes completely outcasted on conversion and can no longer even eat with his family.

000 But I am not suggesting that you should permit Christian missionaries to work in Jongu. I do think, however, that you might take a leaf out of their book. What the people require is some simple education adapted to their special needs, and a really sympathetic doctor, someone who, apart from the purely professional side of his work, is also interested in general social problems. In a country like Sikkim, which has a considerable aristocracy of its own, it should surely be possible to interest a few young men and women of the upper classes in your Lepchas, and induce them to devote some part of their lives to improving these people's condition. As an example of what I mean I need only instance the admirable example of Your Highness's own sister and brother-in-

aw, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have 000
een for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere 511
lse I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are 164
etter fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the resent day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to uffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible xception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of he Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is esponsible for the death of many young children: with nedical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a ertain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, ores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that
ne people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their [515]
onditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the omforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to verdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy nean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and 733
nis, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All ne Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; nd in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most npleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour der and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace vith Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a ome for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead etotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any arm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a ttle. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in noderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the 793
amas are priests only in name; they have no learning 796
eyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of xpounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-
alled religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an [781]
xcuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about
hem'

793 them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are
796 sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of
Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal of good in Jongu.

600 Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any case it is one that will probably answer itself during the
[157] course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

CHAPTER 15

RETURN TO CIVILISATION

24th May:

SEVERAL Lamas spent the night in the monastery so as 796
to be ready for the *Boom Kor* ceremony, which starts at dawn to-morrow. The *Boom Kor* consists in carrying the sacred books, together with a small image of Guru Rimpoche, all round the village. In Jongu this is done once a year, but in other parts of Sikkim twice; its purpose is to keep away sickness, and it may be compared with the old English custom of Beating the Bounds.

Banging of drums and trumpet-playing started punctually 796
at four a.m., after which there was no more sleep for me, and 778
continued at intervals until the procession formed up at about half-past seven and started to move off. Each book was wrapped in yellow silk and carried by a woman, every household in the village being thus represented. The image of Guru Rimpoche was carried by a Lama on a small cushion of yellow, white and blue cloth: another Lama carried a large bell-like contraption, made of the same materials, on a long pole. This represented the god's umbrella. Yet another priest carried a small pot of holy water: this also was adorned with a "ballet skirt" of yellow, white and blue.

The procession went via Ongden's house, and the upper 796
part of the village to Tingkep's house, where the first halt was made and refreshment served. We arrived there at about eight-thirty to find the reading in full swing. No one seemed to be in charge, and each Lama seemed to be reading more or less on his own; but it was obvious that many of them could not read and were merely repeating by heart such bits of the scriptures as they happened to know.

796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all
576 the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As
788 the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tormas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves. This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompani-
788 ment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

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The *Boom Kor* ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.

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855]

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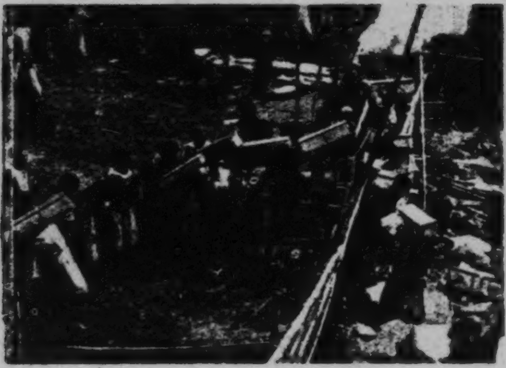

The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.

[778]

Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.

[Facing p.290]

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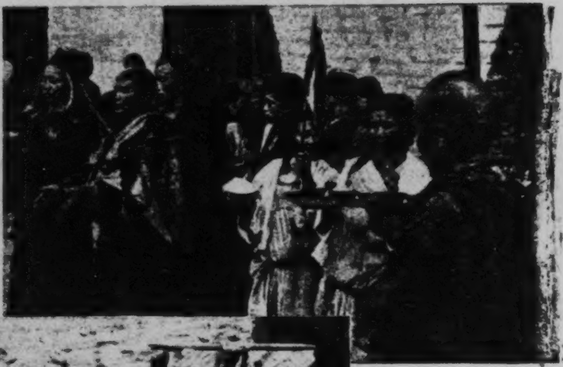
The return of the *Boom Kor* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.



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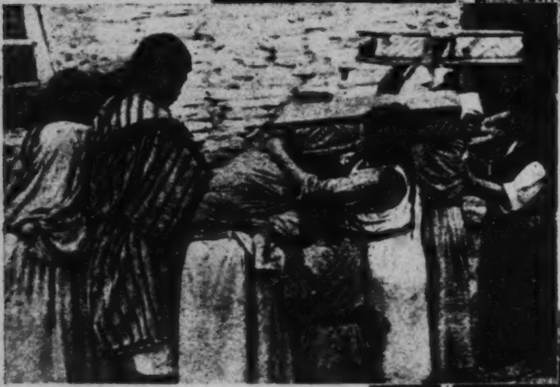
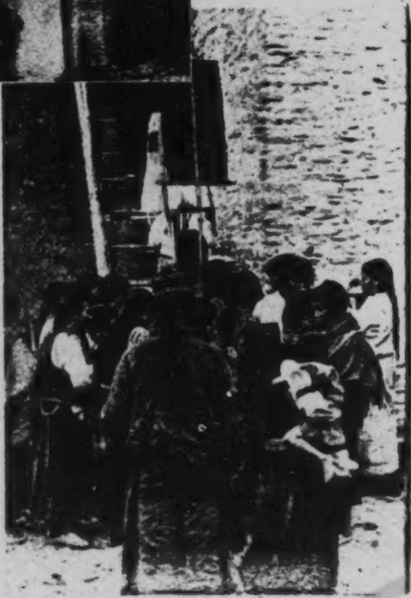


Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.



[FACING p.291]

796 festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind
522 were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

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522 One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

6tt All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

000 people say that the winter snow will prevent us getting beyond the monastery, in which case we shall have to come back to Lingtem again. The Mandal, however, has sent word to the Lama at Talung and told him to provide yaks to take us over to Lachen. I am not afraid of the snow, but the journey will be hardly worth while if it rains the whole time. [789] Tafoor says there is no need to worry about this, as for eight rupees he is prepared to keep the rain away. He did this while the *Boom Kor* ceremony was in progress; and although it rained heavily both before and after, it actually was fine for the two days of the ceremony. It seems absurd to suppose that it really is possible to keep rain away; but, on reflection, is it any more extraordinary than wireless?

791 Tafoor was taught how to keep rain away by the second 789 Dorje-Lopön, who gave up the practice, as soon as his pupil was proficient, in favour of hail-stopping, which is said to be very much easier. The actual instruction takes only a month; but Tafoor says it takes from five to seven years before one can bring the necessary gods properly under one's control. On the night previous lights must be put upon the altar and a libation offered at dawn the following morning. At the same time the gods are asked to keep the rain away for a certain definite period, which must be expressly stated. It is possible to keep the rain away for any period up to one month; but it is not a good thing to stop it for longer than a few days at a time, as this is liable to cause trouble in the household of the Lama concerned, and is also unkind to the various animals and insects which depend upon fresh grass for their food. Last year Tafoor says he remained inside his house during the whole of June in order to stop the rain at the general request of the village, as owing to the exceptionally early monsoon the sowing was not completed when the heavy seasonal rains started. Many people testified to me that in Lingtem it did not rain during the whole of this month, in spite of the fact that there was heavy rain in most of the surrounding districts. This, however, is hardly acceptable as evidence, and all I can testify is that the exceptionally

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early arrival of the monsoon drove us defeated from the 789
slopes of Everest.

During the period in which it is wished to keep the rain [834
away the Lama must have no connection with his wife; nor 784]
should he touch water, but must confine himself to *chi* or tea. There is no harm in looking upon water, but one should on no account wash in it. The area in which rain can be kept away is the whole extent of country visible from the place where the ceremony is being performed. Thus, although Talung is not visible from Lingtem, Tafoor can keep the rain away from that place because the hills above it are visible.

When Tafoor was learning his period of instruction was 791
terminated by a ten-day fast in a completely dark room, into which he was sealed by his teacher. He felt very hungry for the first two days, but after this he had no particular desire for food. He was not even allowed to leave the room
for the purposes of nature and remained sitting in the so- [516]
called "Lotus position" for the whole ten days, telling his beads and meditating. As soon as the fast was over he came straight out into the living-room and no arrangement was made to accustom his eyes gradually to the light. He was
given a little weak tea and some thin gruel, but even this [261]
gave him intense pains in the stomach. On the second day he had a small amount of normal food, after which he resumed his ordinary diet.

In offering to stop the rain while I went up to Talung, 789
Tafoor warned me that his efforts might be completely unsuccessful, for he says he can only do it when his mind is completely in accord with that of the person who wishes the rain kept away; otherwise it will rain harder than ever. He is quite unable to do it for his own brother, for instance: whenever Chodu asks him to keep the rain away, and he has tried many times, it rains as though the end of the world is approaching. But he has never yet had a failure when asked by the Mandal or his senior wife. With others it is possible to ease the rain off sufficiently to make work possible, but not to

789 stop it altogether. Unfortunately, it is not possible to get the Mandal, for instance, to make the request on behalf of another in order to ensure success; and there appears to be no means by which one can tell whether one's mind is in accord with that of the Lama or not; one must take the risk and hope for the best.

791 Tafoor's usual fee is twelve pounds of *chi* millet for stopping rain for a period of three days, whatever the result; but if successful it is usual to give him a further eighty pounds of grain when the crops which were sown during the period in which he kept the rain away are harvested. Should he exercise his powers on behalf of the whole village no payment is made in kind, but the others will work his fields for him: this is equivalent to about two days' work from each person concerned.

789 After setting out his altar with lamps, incense, and so on he must look at the sky very intensely and attempt to drive any clouds away by the power of his thoughts; he must continue to do this as each fresh cloud appears. He must start to do this at dawn; and even if no clouds appear he should concentrate on keeping them away at four p.m., nine p.m., and at one the following morning. It is not possible to compromise by stopping the rain only during the daylight hours; it can only be stopped altogether or not at all. While Tafoor is concentrating he must not talk to anyone and should remain quiet and thoughtful; but once he has set the machinery in motion, so to speak, there is no objection to carrying on with his ordinary occupations, but he must not go out and work in the fields.

* * * * *

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431 I was all packed up and ready to start by seven, but it took some time to take leave of the village, which turned up in force to see me off. Nearly everyone brought a parting present, as a result of which I left Lingtem with enough chickens to start a poultry farm, and sufficient milk to bathe in. I was greatly touched by the people's kindness, but their

presents could not possibly have arrived at a less inconvenient 574
moment. We eventually left at about ten o'clock, in pouring 431
rain, and to the accompaniment of the monastery band,
which went with us for about a quarter of a mile. Tafoor
told me not to worry about the weather: he has set everything
out and it will certainly be fine to-morrow.

We reached Lungdeum in a couple of hours, after which 487
the path degenerated into the very roughest of tracks through
the forest, climbing up and down a great deal. In a number of places the hillsides were too steep for an ordinary path, and here and there narrow lengths of sliced bamboo had been fastened across the cliff face. These are easily negotiable in dry weather by anyone walking barefoot; but a real death-trap when wet to anyone wearing nailed boots, as a false step is liable to precipitate one at least twenty or thirty feet down the hillside, and may even have more serious consequences. The Lepchas laughed at my extremely clumsy efforts to retain my balance. Rubber-soled shoes are the best type of footgear for this sort of work; but in wet weather they merely add to one's difficulties. For anyone who is unaccustomed to walk barefoot it would probably be best to wear a couple of pairs of thick socks or stockings and discard one's boots; they do at least give a good grip on the slippery bamboo planks.

By four o'clock we had dropped down to the river, which 491
had to be crossed before the final climb up to the camping
site at the entrance to the narrow valley that leads up to the monastery. Most of the coolies, who had left Lingtem a long time before me, were waiting on the other side, perhaps in order to have a good laugh at me crossing the bridge. I must confess that I find these Lepcha bridges most terrifying. They are made of heavy strands of cane, joined together and anchored to huge trees on either side of the river. The two main strands also serve as a handrail, and from them smaller canes are suspended at intervals so as to form a series of U-shaped loops. Into these loops long lengths of sliced bamboo are placed end to end. These form the actual

491 footway, which is only about six inches wide. Although the bridge rocks and sways in the most alarming fashion there is not the slightest danger provided one keeps one's head: one slip, however, and there is nothing more to be done; one is precipitated into the river below, from the whirlpools and currents of which there is no escape. The Lepchas themselves cross these bridges at a trot, at the same time carrying a heavy load. [481]

Palden warned me that it would be disastrous to cross in boots; so, very gingerly, I started off in my stockinged feet. My instinct was to go blindly forward with my eyes closed, but it was necessary to select each separate foothold with care, at the same time carefully sliding one's hands forward along the "handrail" each time one took a step forward: it was soon obvious that if all else failed I could never earn my living as a tight-rope walker. The whole trick of crossing these bridges consists in keeping one's gaze fixed, as far as possible, on some spot on the opposite bank. When I was nearing the centre I foolishly looked down at the river; the effect was as though the water was standing still, and the bridge itself appeared to be moving rapidly upstream. Fortunately, someone on the far side shouted to me to look straight ahead, or I think I might have lost my balance. For a second everything appeared to be going round and round in a circle; but I had sufficient control not to loose my handholds. I arrived on the other side pouring with sweat and with a pounding heart. Gratefully, I replaced my boots. I was filled with ridiculous self-satisfaction, which the coolies' unrestrained laughter at my clumsiness did nothing to damp.

000 We reached the camping site just as dusk was falling. It was still pouring with rain and the valley was filled with clouds. The tent was wet through, and most of my bedding was damp. I did not mind it a bit: it was grand to be alone, and on the move again.

2nd June:

A Lama from Talung arrived during the night. He says that owing to the heavy rain of the last few days a great deal 000 of the path has disappeared, as a result of which it will take us another two days to reach the monastery. Also, there has been heavy snow on the pass above, so that it is not yet possible to get from Talung over to Lachen. In view of the weather, which shows no signs of abating, everyone thinks the best course is for us to get out of this valley as quickly as possible, and we accordingly left at six-thirty, deciding to make a day of it and go straight through to Mangen, which we eventually reached at six in the evening. It looked at first as though the weather would clear, but by nine it was only too obvious that my mind was definitely not in accord with Tafoor's: it never ceased raining throughout the day. We decided to keep to the far side of the river, as the path was said to be slightly better. It turned out to be little used, as a result of which we appeared at times to be struggling through virgin jungle. It was impossible to keep the leeches away, [756] and after the first hour or so I gave up trying. Whenever we came to an open patch the coolie who was with me took out his knife and scraped them off my legs: they were so thick [757] that they looked like bunches of worms. It was really a waste of time, for five minutes later they were just as thick as before.

By midday we were opposite Lingtem again, where there was another bridge to cross. I had been dreading this all the morning, but actually I found it comparatively easy; having done it once gave one confidence.

We struggled into Mangen just as the mail was arriving. Nothing much to read, except my pass-book, which, as usual, shows me to possess even less than I imagined. I was wet through to the skin and had no change of clothes, so spent the evening dressed in a magnificent fur-lined sort of mandarin's robe of crimson silk, which Palden managed to borrow from a local Kazi. The coolies arrived at ten p.m.

4th June:

I was unable to move yesterday owing to my legs having ott swollen so much from the leech-bites that I could not get my boots on. It was such a relief to walk on a proper path [487] again that the eighteen miles into Gangtok passed in a flash, and I did not even notice the unevenness of the cobbled path, which on other occasions has seemed so tiring. We reached the bungalow at half-past five, only to find it filled with tourists from Darjeeling. However, the custodian fixed me up in a small shack normally reserved for Tibetan travellers, where I gratefully tore the stockings off my bleeding legs. Leech-bites are not painful; but after the first day they itch in a most intolerable manner.

I was feeling tired and hungry, and ~~not~~ in the best of moods, when one of those desiccated spinsters with a passion for animals, a type peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon race, descended upon me. I produced my politest smile, in the hope that she might at least offer me a cup of tea; but it was not for this that she had come: "Did I know if it was true," she said, "that the Everest Expeditions had slept in this bungalow on their way to Tibet? It would be thrilling to think that one was actually occupying the same bungalow, would it not?" I winked at the bungalow guardian, an old friend, who knew sufficient English to follow the conversation, but before I could think of a suitably fatuous answer she had rattled on again: "I wonder if you could tell me," she said, "what it would cost for me to send my cage of parrots from Calcutta to Bombay?" Fortunately, the arrival of my baggage saved me from further encounters.

6th June, 1937:

Left Gangtok by car in pouring rain at half-past four and arrived at the Odlings' house in Kalimpong just as they were sitting down to dinner; and at once became conscious of my travel-stained appearance. Freddy Chapman, just back from climbing Chomolhari, also there *en route* to England. There is undoubtedly something to be said in favour of polished tables, good food, gleaming

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

491

A Lepcha bridge.

411
291
142

Karma demonstrating the method of using a bow and arrow.

487

"Road" in the upper Talung Valley.

[Facing p. 298]

glass and all the other concomitants of a civilised home. But the pleasure soon palls; for me the wandering life is the only permanent happiness. Soon, I must move on again.

THE END

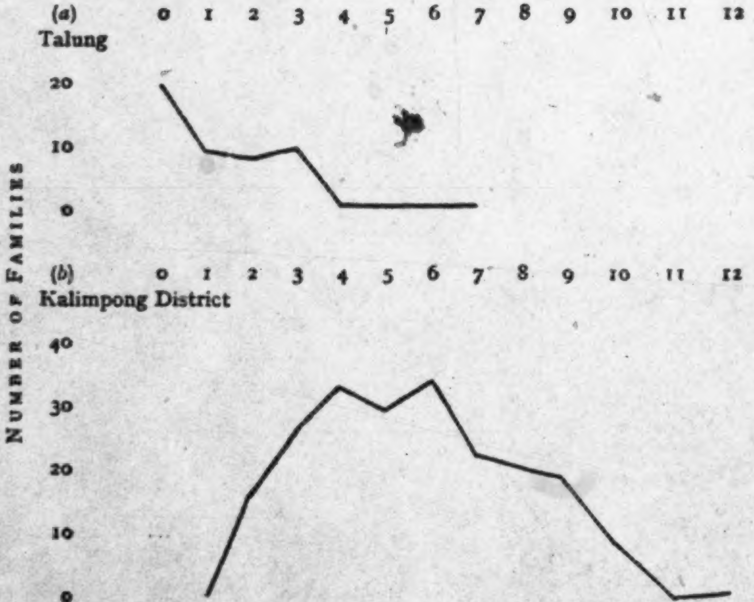
Kalimpong—Hollywood, Florida.
July—December, 1937.

[p. 300 is blank]

APPENDIX I

162 THE charts below show the relative sizes of Lepcha families
184 in (*a*) The Talung Valley, and (*b*) the Kalimpong District of British India. The figures for Kalimpong were very kindly supplied by the Rev. W. M. Scott, Church of Scotland Guild Mission. Figures of childless marriages in this district are unfortunately not available; but Mr. Scott informs me that such a state is rare. I have confined the details of the Talung to families which I believe to be completed. This distinction has not been made in the Kalimpong figures; but for comparative purposes it makes little difference.

Number of children in family.



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APPENDIX 2

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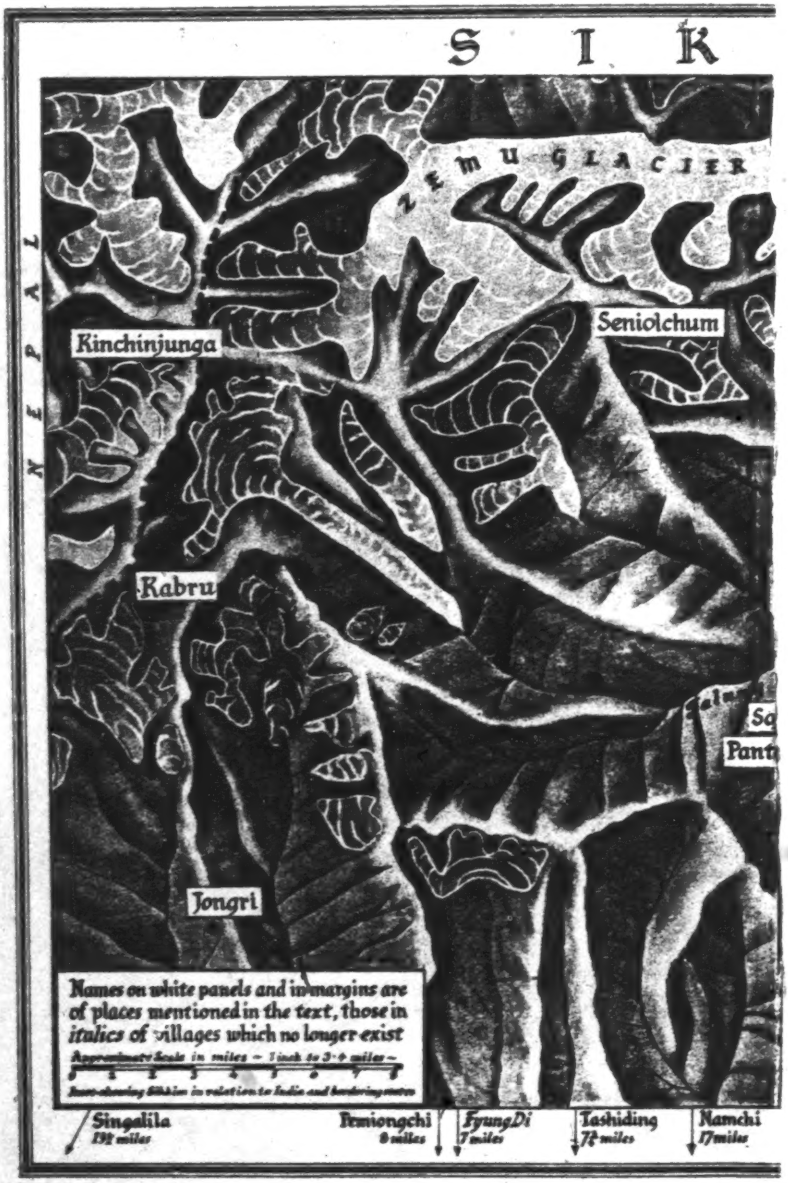
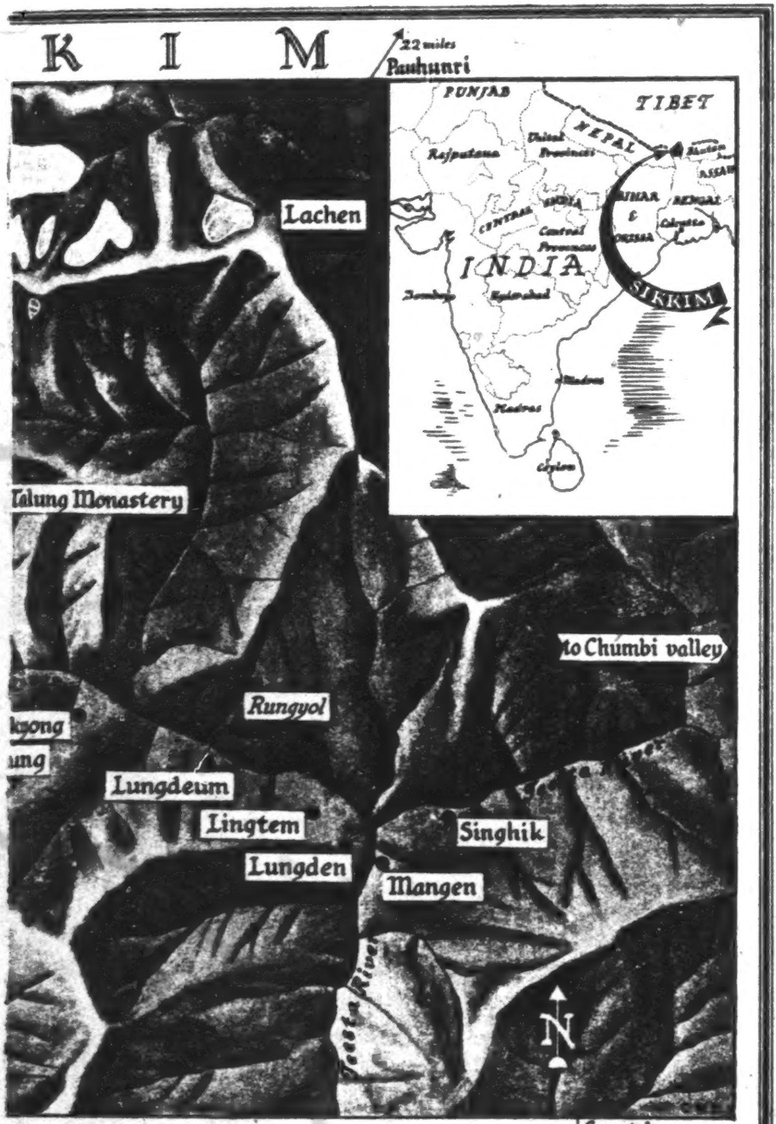

S I K
NEPAL
ZEMU GLACIER
Kinchinjunga
Seniolchum
Kabru
Jongri
Talung
Sa
Pant
Names on white panels and in margins are of places mentioned in the text, those in italics of villages which no longer exist
Approximate Scale in miles – 1 inch to 3·4 miles –
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Inset showing Sikkim in relation to India and bordering states
Singalila 13½ miles
Pemiongchi 8 miles
Fyung Di 7 miles
Tashiding 7½ miles
Namchi 17 miles

[end map (A)]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

133
361
131


K I M
22 miles
Pauhunri
PUNJAB
TIBET
NEPAL
United Provinces
Rajputana
Bhutan
ASSAM
BIHAR & ORISSA
BENGAL
Calcutta
CENTRAL INDIA
Central Provinces
INDIA
Bombay
Hyderabad
SIKKIM
Madras
Madras
Ceylon
Lachen
Talung Monastery
to Chumbi valley
Rungyol
kyong
ung
Lungdeum
Lingtem
Lungden
Singhik
Mangen
Teesta River
N
Gangtok
6 miles

[end map (B)]

[For general protective ceremonial, usually taking place in the spring and autumn, see also category 796.]

[Information concerning the Mun, who is a combination shaman, magician and diviner, has been placed in category 756.]